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THE

MISCELLANEOUS

WORKS

OF

WILLIAM HAZLITT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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TABLE TALK.

ESSAY XX.

On the Spirit of Monarchy.

"Strip [illegible] and what is it but a *jest?*"
Cowper's Progress of Error.

"As for politics, I think that poets are *Tories* by nature, supposing them to be generous poets. The creation of an ideal person or family, that has wealth and rank for its essentials, is a conception greatly adapted to the taste of poets. On the other hand, metaphysical views, abstract reasonings, of necessity compel to patronise *liberty*, the vital part of them, but [illegible] the ideas [illegible] liberty, and [illegible] are entirely *Whigs*. I remember, after my entrance into this maxim, that the Whigs [illegible] that were predicting edgetool people, the Dutch." *Shenstone's Letters.*

The spirit of Monarchy, then, is nothing but the craving in the human mind after the Sovereign and the One. It is not so much a matter of choice or necessity or policy, as a natural instinct, a direct and universal appetite in the popular feelings, which makes the greatest Monarchies dependent on mutual support, and, however [illegible] hostile to each other, [illegible] which is anxious to concentrate itself within the grasp of the imagination, and which, [illegible] would, if it could, [illegible] may at least contemplate the [illegible] power, vanity, and passions, of splayed on their most conspicuous and favourable [illegible] Every individual would [illegible] the whole [illegible] but as he cannot, the next best thing is to see this reflex image of his self-love, the darling passion of his breast, [illegible] to put himself into that object that the eye

lay his hands on for the purpose. The slave admires the tyrant, because the last *is*, what the first *would be*. He surveys himself all over in the glass of royalty. The swelling, bloated self-importance of the one is the very counterpart and ultimate goal of the abject servility of the other. But both hate mankind for the same reason, because a respect for humanity is a diversion to their inordinate self-love, and the idea of the general good is a check to the gross intemperance of passion. The worthlessness of the object does not diminish but irritate the propensity to admire. It serves to pamper our imagination equally, and does not provoke our envy. All we want is to aggrandize our own vain-glory at second hand; and the less of real superiority or excellence there is in the person we fix upon as our proxy in this dramatic exhibition, the more easily can we change places with him, and fancy ourselves as good as he. Nay, the descent favors the rise; and we heap our tribute of applause the higher, in proportion as it is a free gift. An idol is not the worse for being of coarse materials; a king should be a common-place man. Otherwise, he is superior in his own nature, and not dependent on our bounty or caprice. Man is a poetical animal, and delights in fiction. We like to have scope for the exercise of our mere will. We make kings of men, and gods of stocks and stones; we are not jealous of the creatures of our own hands. We only want a peg or loop to hang our idle fancies on, a puppet to dress up, a lay figure to paint from. It is "THING Ferdinand, and not KING Ferdinand," as it was wisely and wittily observed. We ask only for the stage effect; we do not go behind the scenes, or it would go hard with many of our prejudices! We see the symbols of Majesty, we enjoy the pomp, we crouch before the power, we walk in the procession, and make part of the pageant, and we say in our secret hearts, there is nothing but accident that prevents us from being at the head of it. There is something in the mock sublimity of thrones, wonderfully congenial to the human mind. Every man feels that he could sit there; every man feels that he could look big there; every man feels that he could bow there: every man feels that he could play the

monarch there. The transition is so easy, and so delightful! The imagination keeps pace with royal state,

> "And by the vision splendid
> Is on his way attended."

The Madman in Hogarth who fancies himself a king, is not a [illegible] instance of this species of hallucination. Almost every [illegible] subject holds such a barren sceptre in his hand; and the meanest of the rabble, as he runs by the monarch's side, has wit enough to think—"There goes my royal self!" From the most absolute despot to the lowest slave there is but one step [illegible] in point of real merit. As far as truth or reason is concerned, they might change situations to-morrow—nay, they [illegible] without the smallest loss or benefit to mankind! Tyranny, [illegible] is a [illegible] gift [illegible] the entertainment of [illegible]; and it might pass very well, if it did not so [illegible] tragedy.

We [illegible] and a hearty Whig [illegible] George III better than such [illegible] Buonaparte; because, in the former case, there was nothing to overawe the imagination but birth and situation; whereas we could not so easily brook the double superiority of the other, mental as well as adventitious. So does the spirit of [illegible]

[illegible]

respects, a mere cypher."

[illegible]

Truly, he is not a radical politician ; but what is as bad, he is a radical actor. He savors too much of the reality. He is not a mock-tragedian, an automaton player—he is something besides his paraphernalia. He has "that within which passes show." There is not a particle of affinity between him and the patrons of the court-writers. Mr. Young, on the contrary, is the very thing —all assumption and strut, and measured pomp, full of self-importance, void of truth and nature, the mask of the characters he takes, a pasteboard figure, a stiff piece of wax-work. He fills the throne of tragedy, not like an upstart or usurper, but as a matter of course, decked out in his plumes of feathers, and robes of state, stuck into a posture, and repeating certain words by rote. Mr. Kean has a heart in his bosom, beating with human passion (a thing for the great "to fear, not to delight in !") he is a living man, and not an artificial one. How should those, who look to the surface, and never probe deeper, endure him ? He is the antithesis of a court-actor. It is the object there to suppress and varnish over the feelings, not to give way to them. His *overt* manner must shock them, and be thought a breach of all decorum. They are in dread of his fiery humors, of coming near his Voltaic Battery—they choose rather to be roused gently from their self-complacent apathy by the application of Metallic Tractors. They dare not trust their delicate nerves within the estuary of the passions, but would slumber out their torpid existence in a calm, a Dead Sea—the air of which extinguishes life and motion !

Would it not be hard upon a little girl, who is busy in dressing up a favorite doll, to pull it in pieces before her face in order to show her the bits of wood, the wool, and rags, it is composed of ? So it would be hard upon that great baby, the world, to take any of its idols to pieces, and show that they are nothing but painted wood. Neither of them would thank you, but consider the offer as an insult. The little girl knows as well as you do that her doll is a cheat ; but she shuts her eyes to it, for she finds her account in keeping up the deception. Her doll is her pretty little self. In its glazed eyes, its cherry cheeks, its flaxen locks, its finery and its baby house, she has a fairy vision of her own

numbers and their pollution, there was no remedy. The nuisance was intolerable, impassive, immortal. Fear, religious horror, disgust, hatred, heightened the flame of bigotry and intolerance. There was nothing so odious or contemptible but it found a sanctuary in the more odious and contemptible perversity of human nature. The barbarous gods of antiquity reigned *in contempt of their worshippers!*

This game was carried on through all the first ages of the world, and is still kept up in many parts of it; and it is impossible to describe the wars, massacres, horrors, miseries and crimes, to which it gave color, sanctity, and sway. The idea of a God, beneficent and just, the invisible Maker of all things, was abhorrent to their gross material notions. No, they must have Gods of their own making, that they could see and handle, that they knew to be nothing in themselves but senseless images, and these they daubed over with the gaudy emblems of their own pride and passions, and these they lauded to the skies, and grew fierce, obscene, frantic before them, as the representatives of their sordid ignorance and barbaric vices. Truth—Good, were idle names to them, without a meaning. They must have a lie, a palpable, pernicious lie, to pamper their crude, unhallowed conceptions with, and to exercise the untameable fierceness of their wills. The Jews were the only people of antiquity who were withheld from running headlong into this abomination; yet so strong was the propensity in them (from inherent frailty as well as neighboring example) that it could only be curbed and kept back by the hands of Omnipotence.* At length, reason prevailed over imagination so far, that these brute idols and their altars were overturned: it was thought too much to set up stocks and stones, Golden Calves and Brazen Serpents, as *bonâ fide* Gods and Goddesses, which men were to fall down and worship at their peril—and Pope long after summed up the merits of the whole mythologic tribe in a handsome distich—

* They *would* have a king in spite of the devil. The image-worship of the Papists is a batch of the same leaven. The apishness of man's nature would not let even the Christian religion escape.

"O, is particular, that e'er passion'd virgin,
When attributes were taken to express a deity!"

It was [illegible] a bold stroke to divert the course of our imagination, to convert [illegible] our admiration, our love of the mighty and the marvellous to [illegible] and to the living object; and there we stick. We have got living gods, instead of dead ones; and we take it that they are real, and put faith in them accordingly. O, Reason! when will thy long minority expire? It is not now the fashion to make gods of wood, and stone, and brass, but we make kings of common men, and are proud of our own handy-work. We take a child from his birth, and we agree, when he grows up to be a man, to heap the highest honors of the land upon him, and to pay the most devoted homage to his [illegible] in the person, "any mark, any lineament, any thing" of the sovereign awe and dread? No; he may be little, weak, contemptible, little short of a madman, and yet he is no less qualified for king. If he can contrive to pass the College of Physicians, the Heralds' College dub him divine, can we make any given individual taller, or stronger, or wiser, than other men, or different in any respect from what nature intended him to be? No; but we can make a king of him. We cannot add a cubit to the stature, or instil a virtue into the mind of [illegible] but we can put a sceptre into their hands,

[illegible]

[illegible] *Dissertation*, p. 4

a crown upon their heads, we can set them on an eminence, we can surround them with circumstance, we can aggrandize them with power, we can pamper their appetites, we can pander to their wills. We can do everything to exalt them in external rank and station—nothing to lift them one step higher in the scale of moral or intellectual excellence.

Education does not give capacity or temper; and the education of kings is not especially directed to useful knowledge or liberal sentiment. What then is the state of the case? The highest respect of the community and of every individual in it is paid and is due of right there, where perhaps not an idea can take root, or a single virtue be engrafted. Is not this to erect a standard of esteem directly opposite to that of mind and morals? The lawful monarch may be the best or the worst man of his dominions, he may be the wisest or the weakest, the wittiest or the stupidest: still he is equally entitled to our homage as king, for it is the place and power we bow to, and not the man. He may be a sublimation of all the vices and diseases of the human heart; yet we are not to say so, we dare not even think so. "Fear God, and honor the King," is equally a maxim at all times and seasons. The personal character of the king has nothing to do with the question. Thus the extrinsic is set up over the intrinsic by authority: wealth and interest lend their countenance to gilded vice and infamy on principle, and outward show and advantages become the symbols and the standard of respect in despite of useful qualities or well-directed efforts through all ranks and gradations of society. "From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is no soundness left:" The whole style of moral thinking, feeling, acting, is in a false tone—is hollow, spurious, meretricious. Virtue, says Montesquieu, is the principle of republics; honor, of a monarchy. But it is "honor dishonorable, sin-bred" it is the honor of truckling a principle for a place, of exchanging our honest convictions for a ribbon or a garter. The business of life is a scramble for unmerited precedence. Is not the highest respect entailed, the highest station filled without any possible proofs or pretensions to public spirit or public principle? Shall not the next places to it

What chance is there that monarchs should not yield to the temptations of gallantry then, when youth and beauty are as wax? What female heart can indeed withstand the attractions of a throne—the smile that melts all hearts, the air that awes rebellion, the frown that kings dread, the hand that scatters fairy wealth, that bestows titles, places, honor, power, the breast on which the star glitters, the head circled with a diadem, whose dress dazzles with its richness and its taste, who has nations at his command, senates at his control, "in form and motion so express and admirable, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a God; the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals!" The power of resistance is so much the less where fashion extends impunity to the frail offender, and screens the loss of character.

"Vice is undone, if she forgets her birth,
And stoops from angels to the dregs of earth,
But 'tis the fall degrades her to a whore:
Let greatness own her, and she is mean no more.
Her birth, her beauty, crowds and courts confess,
Chaste matrons praise her, and grave bishops bless.
In golden chains the willing world she draws,
And hers the Gospel is, and hers the laws."*

* A lady of quality abroad, in allusion to the gallantries of the reigning Prince, being told, "I suppose it will be your turn next?" said, "No, I hope not: for you know it is impossible to refuse!" What a satire on the court and fashionables! If this be true, female virtue in the blaze of royalty is no more than the moth in the candle, or ice in the sun's ray. What will the great themselves say to it, in whom at this rate,

——"the same luck holds,
They all are subjects, courtiers, and cuckolds!"

Out upon it! We'll not believe it. Alas! poor virtue, what is to become of the very idea of it, if we are to be told that every man within the precincts of a palace is a *hypothetical* cuckold, or holds his wife's virtue in trust for the Prince. We entertain no doubt that many ladies of quality have resisted the importunities of a throne, and that many more would do so in private life, if they had the desired opportunity: nay, we have been assured by several that a king would no more be able to prevail with them than any other man! If, however, there is any foundation for the above insinuation, it throws no small light on the Spirit of Monarchy, which by the supposition implies in it the *virtual* surrender of the whole sex at discretion: and at the same time accounts perhaps for the indifference shown by some monarchs in availing themselves of so mechanical a privilege.

esses are set, and revealed to the eye decked out in ostrich feathers and pearls, like beds of lilies sparkling with a thousand dew-drops—the marshals and the heralds are in motion—the full organ, majestic peals forth the Coronation Anthem—everything is ready—and all at once the majesty of kingdoms bursts upon the astonished sight—his person is swelled out with all the gorgeousness of dress, and swathed in bales of silk and golden tissues—the bow with which he greets the assembled multitude, and the representatives of foreign kings, is the climax of conscious dignity, bending gracefully on its own bosom, and instantly thrown back into the sightless air, as if asking no recognition in return—the oath of mutual fealty between him and his people is taken—the fairest flowers of female beauty precede the Sovereign, scattering roses; the sons of princes page his heels, holding up the robes of crimson and ermine—he staggers and reels under the weight of royal pomp, and of a nation's eyes; and thus the pageant is launched into the open day, dazzling the sun, whose beams seem beaten back by the sun of royalty—there were the warrior, the statesman, and the mitred head—there was Prince Leopold, like a panther in its dark glossy pride, and Castlereagh, clad in triumphant smiles and snowy satin, unstained with his own blood—the loud trumpet brays, the cannon roars, the spires are mad with music—the crowd press on, the metropolis heaves like a sea in restless motion, the air is thick with loyalty's quick pants in its monarch's arms—all eyes drink up the sight, all tongues reverberate the sound—

> "A present deity they shout around,
> A present deity the vaulted roofs rebound!"

What does it all amount to? A show—a theatrical spectacle! What does it prove? That a king is crowned—that a king is dead! What is the moral to be drawn from it, that is likely to sink into the heart of a nation? That greatness consists in finery, and that supreme merit is the dower of birth and fortune? It is a form, a ceremony to which each successor to the throne is entitled in his turn as a matter of right. Does it

Those lines in Cowper also must sound very puerile or old-fashioned to courtly ears :

> " The only Amaranthine flower on earth
> Is virtue ; the only lasting treasure, truth."

To this sentiment, however, we subscribe our hearts and hands. There is nothing truly liberal but that which postpones its own claims to those of propriety—or great, but that which looks out of itself to others. All power is but an unabated nuisance, a barbarous assumption, an aggravated injustice, that is not directed to the common good : all grandeur that has not something corresponding to it in personal merit and heroic acts, is a deliberate burlesque, and an insult on common sense and human nature. That which is true, the understanding ratifies : that which is good, the heart owns : all other claims are spurious, vitiated, mischievous, false—fit only for those who are sunk below contempt, or raised above opinion. We hold in scorn all *right-lined* pretensions but those of rectitude. If there is offence in this, we are ready to abide by it. If there is shame, we take it to ourselves ; and we hope and hold that the time will come, when all other idols but those which represent pure truth and real good, will be looked upon with the same feelings of pity and wonder that we now look back to the images of Thor and Woden !

Really, that men born to a throne (limited or unlimited) should employ the brief span of their existence here in doing all the mischief in their power, in levying cruel wars and undermining the liberties of the world, to prove to themselves and others that their pride and passions are of more consequence than the welfare of mankind at large, would seem a little astonishing, but that the fact is so. It is not our business to preach lectures to monarchs, but if we were at all disposed to attempt the ungracious task, we should do it in the words of an author who often addressed the ear of monarchs.

'A man may read a sermon," says Jeremy Taylor, "the best and most passionate that ever man preached, if he shall but enter into the sepulchres of kings. In the same Escurial where the Spanish princes live in greatness and power, and

deeds of war or peace, they have wisely placed a cemetery, where their ashes and their glory shall sleep till time shall be no more; and where our kings have been crowned, their ancestors lie interred, and they must walk over their grandsire's head to take his crown. There is an acre sown with royal seed, the copulation of the greatest change from rich to naked, from ceiled roofs to arched coffins, from living like gods to die like men. There is enough to cool the flames of lust, to abate the heights of pride, to appease the itch of covetous desires, to sully and dash out the dissembling colours of a lustful, artificial, and imaginary beauty. There the warlike and the peaceful, the fortunate and the miserable, the beloved and the despised princes mingle their dust, and pay down their symbol of mortality, and tell all the world, that when we die our ashes shall be equal to kings, and our accounts shall be easier, and our pains or our crowns shall be less. To my apprehension, it is a sad record which is left by Athenæus concerning Ninus, the great Assyrian monarch, whose life and death is summed up in these words: 'Ninus, the Assyrian, had an ocean of gold, and other riches more than the sand in the Caspian sea; he never saw the stars, and perhaps he never desired it; he never stirred up the holy fire among the Magi; nor touched the God with the sacred rod, according to the laws; he never offered sacrifice, nor worshipped the Deity, nor administered justice, nor spake to the people, nor numbered them; but he was most valiant to eat and drink, and having mingled his wines, he threw the rest upon the stones. This man is dead: behold his sepulchre, and now hear where Ninus is. [illegible] Taylor's Holy Living and Dying.

ESSAY XXI.

The Vatican.

L. The Vatican did not quite answer your expectation?

H. To say the truth, it was not such a blow as the Louvre; but then it came after it, and what is more, at the distance of twenty years. To have made the same impression, it should have been twenty times as fine; though that was scarcely possible, since all that there is fine in the Vatican, in Italy, or in world, was in the Louvre when I first saw it, except the frescoes of Raphael and Michael Angelo, which could not be transported, without taking the walls of the building across the Alps.

L. And what, may I ask (for I am curious to hear), did you think of these same frescoes?

H. Much the same as before I saw them. As far as I could judge, they are very like the prints. I do not think the spectator's idea of them is enhanced beyond this. The Raphaels, of which you have a distinct and admirable view, are somewhat faded—I do not mean in color, but the outline is injured—and the Sibyls and Prophets in the Sistine Chapel are painted on the ceiling at too great a height for the eye to distinguish the faces as accurately as one would wish. The features and expressions of the figures near the bottom of the "Last Judgment" are sufficiently plain; and horrible enough they are.

L. What was your opinion of the "Last Judgment" itself?

H. It is literally too big to be seen. It is like an immense field of battle, or charnel-house strewed with carcasses and naked bodies: or it is a shambles of Art. You have huge limbs apparently torn from their bodies and stuck against the wall: anatomical dissections, backs and diaphragms, tumbling "with hideous ruin and combustion down," neither intelligible groups, nor perspective, nor color: you distinguish the princi-

pal figure, that of Christ, only from its standing in the centre of the picture, on a sort of island of earth, separated from the rest of the subject by an inlet of sky. The whole is a sea of enormous gladiators contending, which you can only know [illegible] quantity and number, and vast, uncouth masses of bones and muscles. It has the incoherence and distortion of a troubled dream, without the shadowiness; everything is here corporeal and [illegible] dimensions.

L. For surely there must be something fine in the Sibyls and Prophets, [illegible] the copies we have of them; justifying the high encomiums of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and of so many others?

H. It appears to me that nothing can be finer, as to form, attitude, and outline. The whole conception is so far inimitably noble and just; and all that is felt as wanting, is a proportionate [illegible] of expression in the countenances, though of this I am not sure, for the height (as I said before) baffles a [illegible]. They looked to me unfinished, vague, and general, like some fabulous figure from the antique, the heads were brutal, the bodies divine. Or at most, the faces were only continuations of and on a par with the physical form, large and bold, and with great breadth of drawing, but no more the seat of a struggling spirit, or with a more powerful and varied [illegible] emanating from them, than from the [illegible] [illegible] drapery. The thing [illegible] the mind is, I suspect, wanting. [illegible] There is a [illegible] and [illegible], grandeur and simplicity in the [illegible]; but they are not [illegible] with [illegible], with [illegible] passion, like Raphael's [illegible] On the contrary, they seem only to be half awakened, and might be almost thought asleep. They are fine [illegible], and contain a capacity of expression, but are not [illegible] becoming [illegible]. The outward, material [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Michael Angelo [illegible] Raphael [illegible] and [illegible] of the ultimate [illegible].

L. But does not the difference arise from the nature of the subjects?

H. I should think not. Surely, a Sybil in the height of her phrensy, or an inspired Prophet—"seer blest"—in the act of receiving or announcing the will of the Almighty, is not a less fit subject for the most exalted and impassioned expression than an Apostle, a Pope, a Saint, or a common man. If you say that these persons are not represented in the act of inspired communication, but in their ordinary quiescent state,—granted; but such preternatural workings, as well as the character and frame of mind proper for them, must leave their shadowings and lofty traces behind them. The face that has once held communion with the Most High, or been wrought to madness by deep thought and passion, or that inly broods over its sacred or its magic lore, must be "as a book where one may read strange matters," that cannot be opened without a correspondent awe and reverence. But here is "neither the cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night;" neither the blaze of immediate inspiration nor the hallowed radiance, the mystic gloomy light that follows it, so far as I was able to perceive. I think it idle to say that Michael Angelo painted man in the abstract, and so left expression indeterminate, when he painted prophets and other given characters in particular. He has painted them on a larger scale, and cast their limbs in a gigantic mould to give a dignity and command answering to their situations and high calling, but I do not see the same high character and intensity of thought or purpose impressed upon their countenances. Thus, nothing can be nobler or more characteristic than the figure of the prophet Jeremiah. It is not abstracted, but symbolical of the history and functions of the individual. The whole figure bends and droops, under a weight of wo, like a large willow tree surcharged with showers. Yet there is no peculiar expression of grief in one part more than another; the head hangs down despondingly indeed, but so do the hands, the clothes, and every other part seems to labor under and be involved in a complication of distress. Again, the prophet Ezra is represented reading, in a striking attitude of

attention, and with the book held close to him as if to lose no part of its contents in empty space: all this is finely imagined and the face, lit from the book, reflects back some of its pregnant, hoped-for meaning on the face, which, though large and stately, is ordinary, unimpassioned, and even vacant one. [illegible], I should look for a face of inward thought and [illegible] [illegible] seem as if the compression of the features were produced by external force as much as by intellectual perplexity. I might extend these remarks to this artist's other works; for instance, to the Moses, of which the form and attitude express the utmost dignity and energy of purpose, but the face wants a something of the intelligence and expressive views of the Hebrew legislator. It is cut from the same block, and by the same heavy, sweeping hand, as the sandals or the drapery.

N. Do you think there is any truth or value in the distinction which [illegible] Raphael the dramatic, and to Michael Angelo the epic department of the art?

H. Very little, I confess. It is so far true, that Michael Angelo chiefly drew single figures, and Raphael chiefly groups; but Michael Angelo gave [illegible] and action to his figures, though not the same expression to the face. I think this arose from two circumstances: first, [illegible] as a sculptor, in which form predominates, and in which the fixed lineaments are more affected [illegible] which are not so [illegible] [illegible] in painting. Secondly, [illegible] Michael Angelo [illegible] sympathize with [illegible], with [illegible] thus while the [illegible] in [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] group. He [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Raphael [illegible] that [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] Michael Angelo [illegible] [illegible]

drowsy and material one. For example, in the figure of Adam coming from the hand of his Creator, the composition, which goes on the idea of a being starting into life at the touch of Omnipotence, is sublime :—the figure of Adam reclining at ease with manly freedom and independence, is worthy of the original founder of our race ; and the expression of the face, implying passive resignation and the first consciousness of existence, is in thorough keeping—but I see nothing in the countenance of the Deity denoting supreme might and majesty. The Eve, too, lying extended at the foot of the Forbidden Tree, has an elasticity and buoyancy about it, that seems as if it could bound up from the earth of its own accord, like a bow that was bent. It is all life and grace. The action of the head thrown back, and the upward look, correspond to the rest. The artist was here at home. In like manner, in the allegorical figures of Night and Morn at Florence, the faces are ugly or distorted, but the contour and actions of the limbs express dignity and power in the very highest degree. The legs of the figure of Night, in particular, are twisted into the involutions of a serpent's folds ; the neck is curved like the horse's, and is clothed with thunder.

L. What then is the precise difference between him and Raphael, according to your conception ?

H. As far as I can explain the matter, it seems to me that Michael Angelo's forms are finer, but that Raphael's are more fraught with meaning ; that the rigid outline and disposable masses in the first are more grand and imposing, but that Raphael put a greater proportion of sentiment into his, and calls into play every faculty of the mind and body of which his characters are susceptible, with greater subtilty and intensity of feeling. Dryden's lines,

> "A fiery soul that working out its way
> Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
> And o'er informed the tenement of clay—"

do not exactly answer to Raphael's character, which is mild and thoughtful rather than fiery ; nor is there any want either of grace or grandeur in his figures : but the passage describes the "o'er-informing" spirit that breathes through them, and the un-

equal struggle of the expression to vent itself by more than ordinary physical means. Raphael lived a much shorter time than Michael Angelo, who also lived long after him; and there is no comparison between the number, the variety, or the finished character of their works. Michael Angelo possibly lost himself in the material and instrumental part of art, in embodying a technical theory, or in acquiring the grammar of different branches of study, excelling in knowledge and in gravity of pretension; whereas Raphael gave himself up to the diviner or lovelier impulses that [illegible] over the face of things, being governed by a sense of beauty and of general truth. There is nothing exclusive or repulsive in Raphael; he is open to all impressions alike, and seems to identify himself with whatever he saw that [illegible] or excited interest in others. Michael Angelo studied for himself, and raised his subjects to the standard of his conceptions, [illegible] or system; Raphael invented for others, and was guided only by a sympathy with them. Michael Angelo was painter, sculptor, architect; but he might be said to make of each art a [illegible], in which to build up the stately and gigantic stature of his own mind. Raphael was only a painter, but in that one art he seemed to pour out all the treasures and various excellence of nature, grandeur, and scope of design, exquisite finishing, [illegible], the [illegible] of women, the [illegible], the subtlest feeling, invention, character, [illegible] quality [illegible] the picture expression. Michael Angelo [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] imperfect, and unfinished.

N. Why [illegible] then [illegible] particularly [illegible]?

H. I [illegible] in the V[illegible].

[illegible]

which I think peculiarly characteristic. It is an ordinary face and figure, in a somewhat awkward dress: but he seems as if he had literally walked into the picture at that instant; he is looking forward with a mixture of earnestness and curiosity, as if the scene were passing before him, and every part of his figure and dress is flexible and in motion, pliant to the painter's plastic touch. This figure, so unconstrained and free, animated, salient, put me in mind, compared with the usual stiffness and shackles of the art, of chain armor used by the knights of old instead of coat-of-mail. Raphael's fresco-figures seem the least of all others taken from plaster-casts; this is more than can be said of Michael Angelo's, which might be taken from, or would serve for, very noble ones. The horses in the same picture also delight me. Though dumb, they appear as if they could speak, and were privy to the import of the scene. Their inflated nostrils and speckled skins are like a kind of proud flesh; or they are spiritualized. In the Miracle of Bolsano is that group of children, round-faced, smiling, with large-orbed eyes, like infancy nestling in the arms of affection: the studied elegance of the choir of tender novices, with all their sense of the godliness of their function and the beauty of holiness; and the hard, tiny, individual portraits of priests and cardinals on the right hand, which have the same life, spirit, boldness and marked character, as if you could have looked in upon the assembled conclave. Neither painting nor poetry ever produced anything finer. There is the utmost hardness and materiality of outline, with a spirit of fire. The School of Athens is full of striking parts and ingenious contrasts; but I prefer to it the Convocation of Saints with that noble circle of Prophets and Apostles in the sky, on whose bent foreheads and downcast eyes you see written the City of the Blest, the beatific presence of the Most High and the Glory hereafter to be revealed, a solemn brightness and a fearful dream, and that scarce less inspired circle of sages canonised here on earth, poets, heroes, and philosophers, with the painter himself, entering on one side like the recording angel, smiling in youthful beauty, and scarce conscious of the scene he has embodied. If there is a failure in any of these frescoes, it is, I think, in the Parnassus, in which there is some-

thing quaint and affected. In the St. Peter delivered from prison, he has later with Rembrandt into the dark chambers of night, and thrown a glory round them. In the story of Cupid and Psyche, at the Little Farnese, he has, I think, even surpassed himself in a certain swelling and voluptuous grace, as if beauty grew and ripened under his touch, and the very genius of ancient Greece hovered over his enamored pencil.

L. I always believe you when you praise, not always when you condemn. Was there anything else that you saw to give you a higher idea of him than the specimens we have in this country?

H. Nothing superior to the Cartoons for boldness of design and execution; but I think his best oil pictures are abroad, though I have a sketch of one before me in the Louvre. I had only a cursory view of the Crowning of the Virgin, which is in the picture gallery of the Vatican, and appears to me one of his very highest and most spiritual pictures. The angel in the clouds is of an admirable sedateness and dignity, and over the throng of breathing faces below there is poured a stream of joy and fervor such as that can be compared to nothing but the golden light that evening skies pour on the edges of the singing waves. "Hope elevates, and joy brightens their every feature." The Incoronation of the Virgin was at Paris, in which I could say I am quite satisfied with the Madonna; it has rather a [illegible] expression, but I suppose it would be unjust to require [illegible] and heavenly purity, [illegible] perfection, [illegible] as full of rosy health and joy, as the cup is full of the juice of [illegible] I have another picture of his, [illegible] the Nativity, [illegible] of the Virgin, [illegible] Louvre [illegible] Wyatt [illegible] inimitable works, "scattered like stray gifts o'er the earth," [illegible] that we cannot [illegible]

exalting all around, I am at a loss to find motives for equal admiration or gratitude in what Michael Angelo has left, though his Prophets and Sibyls on the walls of the Sistine Chapel are *thumping make-weights* thrown into the opposite scale. It is nearly impossible to weigh or measure their different merits. Perhaps Michael Angelo's works, in their vastness and unity, may give a greater blow to some imaginations and lift the mind more out of itself, though accompanied with less delight or food for reflection, resembling the rocky precipice, whose "stately height though bare" overlooks the various excellence and beauty of subjected art.

L. I do not think your premises warrant your conclusion. If what you have said of each is true, I should give the undoubted preference to Raphael as at least the greater painter, if not the greater man. I must prefer the finest face to the largest mask.

H. I wish you could see and judge for yourself.

L. I prithee do not mock me. Proceed with your account. Was there nothing else worth mentioning after Raphael and Michael Angelo?

H. So much, that it had slipped from my memory. There are the finest statues in the world there, and they are scattered and put into niches or separate little rooms for effect, and not congregated together like a meeting of the marble gods of mythology, as was the case in the Louvre. There are some of Canova's, worked up to a high pitch of perfection, which might just as well have been left alone—and there are none, I think, equal to the Elgin marbles. A bath of one of the Antonines, a solid porphyry and as large as a good-sized room, struck me as the strongest proof of ancient magnificence. The busts are innumerable, inimitable, have a breathing clearness and transparency, revive ancient history, and are very like actual English heads and characters. The inscriptions alone on fragments of antique marble would furnish years of study to the curious or learned in that way. The vases are most elegant—of proportions and materials unrivalled in taste and in value. There are some tapestry copies of the Cartoons, very glaring and unpleasant to look at. The room containing the colored maps

of Italy, died about three hundred years ago, is one of the [illegible] perhaps [illegible] striking; and the passing through it [illegible] [illegible] and marbles [illegible] is like [illegible] journey. You recall [illegible] the most [illegible] scenes and objects. Out of the windows of these long [illegible] galleries, you look down into a labyrinth of inner and of outer courts, or catch the dome of St. Peter's adjoining like a large shadow, or gaze at the distant amphitheatre of hills surrounding the Sacred City, which excite a pleasing awe, whether considered as the haunts of banditti or [illegible] the hallowed spot, [illegible] they have overlooked for ages, Imperial or Papal R[illegible] Here [illegible] of the Vatican is a room stuffed full of [illegible] Transfiguration, or the St. Jerome [illegible] and [illegible] together; and on certain days of the week the whole range of the rooms is [illegible] to the entire population of Rome and [illegible] and peasants, with heads not unlike those that gleam from the walls, perfect in expression and in [illegible] peasant girls [illegible] Raphael himself, from the portraits of him, might be supposed [illegible] There [illegible] a portrait of George the Fourth in his robes (a present to his Holiness) turned into an [illegible] St. P[illegible] James III. [illegible] [illegible] James III. [illegible] [illegible] honoured [illegible]

I. [illegible]

II. [illegible] me.

ESSAY XXII.

On Milton's Sonnets.

The great object of the Sonnet seems to be, to express in musical numbers, and as it were with undivided breath, some occasional thought or personal feeling, "some fee-grief due to the poet's breast." It is a sigh uttered from the fulness of the heart, an involuntary aspiration born and dying in the same moment. I have always been fond of Milton's Sonnets for this reason, that they have more of this personal and internal character than any others; and they acquire a double value when we consider that they come from the pen of the loftiest of our poets. Compared with Paradise Lost, they are like tender flowers that adorn the base of some proud column or stately temple. The author in the one could work himself up with unabated fortitude "to the height of his great argument;" but in the other he has shown he could condescend to men of low estate, and after the lightning and the thunder-bolt of his pen, lets fall some drops of natural pity over hapless infirmity, mingling strains with the nightingale's, "most musical, most melancholy." The immortal poet pours his mortal sorrows into our breasts, and a tear falls from his sightless orbs on the friendly hand he presses. The Sonnets are a kind of pensive record of past achievements, loves, and friendships, and a noble exhortation to himself to bear up with cheerful hope and confidence to the last. Some of them are of a more quaint and humorous character; but I speak of those only, which are intended to be serious and pathetical. I do not know indeed but they may be said to be almost the first effusions of this sort of natural and personal sentiment in the language. Drummond's ought perhaps to be excepted, were they formed less closely on the model of Petrarch's, so as to be often little more than translations of the Italian poet. But Milton's Sonnets are truly his own in allusion, thought, and versification. Those of Sir Philip

Sydney, who was a great transgressor in this way, turns sufficiently on himself and his own adventures; but they are elaborately quaint and intricate, and more like riddles than sonnets. They are "very tolerable and not to be endured." Shakspeare's, which some persons better informed in such matters than I can pretend to be, profess to cry up as "the divine, the matchless, what you will,"—to say nothing of the want of point or a leading, prominent idea in most of them, are I think overcharged and monotonous, and as to their ultimate drift, as for myself, I can make neither head nor tail of it. Yet some of them, I own, are sweet even to a sense of faintness, luscious as the woodbine, and graceful and luxuriant like it. Here is one.

"From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing;
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds, nor the sweet smell
Of different flowers in odour and in hue,
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew:
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose;
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
Yet seem'd it winter still, and you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play."

I am not aware of any writer of Sonnets worth mentioning here till long after Milton, that is, till the time of Warton and the revival of a taste for Italian and for our own early literature. During the rage of French models, the Sonnet had not been much studied. It is a mode of composition that depends entirely on expression; and this the French and artificial style gladly dispenses with, as it lays no particular stress on anything—except [illegible] commonplaces. Warton's Sonnets are full of [illegible], both in style and matter: they are [illegible] of very [illegible] sentiment; but the thoughts, though fine and [illegible], are not, like Milton's [illegible], and so [illegible] Mr. W[illegible] are

also finely conceited and high-sounding Sonnets. They mouth it well, and are said to be sacred to Liberty. Brutus's exclamation, "Oh Virtue, I thought thee a substance, but I find thee a shadow," was not considered as a compliment, but as a bitter sarcasm. The beauty of Milton's Sonnets is their sincerity, the spirit of poetical patriotism which they breathe. Either Milton's or the living bard's are defective in this respect. There is no Sonnet of Milton's on the Restoration of Charles II. There is no Sonnet of Mr. Wordsworth's, corresponding to that of "the poet blind and bold," *On the late Massacre in Piedmont.* It would be no niggard praise to Mr. Wordsworth to grant that he was either half the man or half the poet that Milton was. He has not his high and various imagination, nor his deep and fixed principle. Milton did not worship the rising sun, nor turn his back on a losing and fallen cause.

"Such recantation had no charms for him!"

Mr. Southey has thought proper to put the author of Paradise Lost into his late Heaven, on the understood condition that he is "no longer to kings and to hierarchies hostile." In his life-time he gave no sign of such an alteration; and it is rather presumptuous in the poet-laureate to pursue the deceased antagonist of Salmasius into the other world to compliment him with his own infirmity of purpose. It is a wonder he did not add in a note that Milton called him aside to whisper in his ear that he preferred the new English hexameters to his own blank verse!

Our first of poets was one of our first of men. He was an eminent instance to prove that a poet is not another name for the slave of power and fashion; as is the case with painters and musicians—things without an opinion—and who merely aspire to make up the pageant and show of the day. There are persons in common life who have that eager curiosity and restless admiration of bustle and splendor, that sooner than not be admitted on great occasions of feasting and luxurious display, they will go in the character of livery-servants to stand behind the chairs of the great. There are others who can so little bear

to be left for any length of time out of the grand carnival and masquerade of pride and folly, that they will gain a reputation [illegible] the expense of their character as well as of a change of [illegible]. Milton was not one of these. He had [illegible] his competitors, a lofty, contemplative principle, and consciousness of inward power and worth, to be tempted by such idle baits. We have plenty of examples and complaints among some modern writers with the triumphs over their own views and principles; but none of a patient resignation to defeat, sustaining and nourishing itself with the thought of the justice of their cause, and with firm-fixed rectitude. I do not pretend to defend the tone of Milton's political writings (which was borrowed from the style of controversial divinity) or to say that he was right in the part he took: I say that he was consistent in it, and did not convict himself of error: he was consistent in it in spite of danger and obloquy, "on evil days though fallen, and evil tongues," and therefore his character has the salt of honesty about it. It does not offend in the nostrils of posterity. He had taken his part boldly and stood to it manfully, and submitted to the change of times with pious resignation and high-minded consolation on the resources of his own mind and the recollection of the past, instead of endeavouring to [illegible] a retreat for the time to come. As an instance of this temper, take one of the best and most [illegible] of these Sonnets, [illegible] that to Cyriac Skinner, on his own blindness.

"Cyriac, this three years' day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heaven's hand or will, nor bate a jot
Of heart or hope; but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overplied
In liberty's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side.
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask,
Content though blind, had I no better guide."

Nothing can exceed the mild, subdued tone of this Sonnet, nor the striking grandeur of the concluding thought. It is curious to remark what seems to be a trait of character in the two first lines. From Milton's care to inform the reader that "his eyes were still clear to outward view of spot or blemish," it would be thought that he had not yet given up all regard to personal appearance; a feeling to which his singular beauty at an earlier age might be supposed naturally enough to lead. Of the political or (what may be called) his *State-Sonnets*, those to Cromwell, to Fairfax, and to the younger Vane, are full of exalted praise and dignified advice. They are neither familiar nor servile. The writer knows what is due to power and to fame. He feels the true, unassumed equality of greatness. He pays the full tribute of admiration for great acts achieved, and suggests becoming occasion to deserve higher praise. That to Cromwell is a proof how completely our poet maintained the erectness of his understanding and spirit in his intercourse with men in power. It is such a compliment as a poet might pay to a conqueror and head of the state, without the possibility of self-degradation.

"Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud,
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast plough'd,
And on the neck of crowned fortune proud
Hast rear'd God's trophies and his work pursued,
While Darwen stream with blood of Scots imbrued,
And Dunbar field resounds thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureat wreath. Yet much remains
To conquer still: peace hath her victories
No less renown'd than war: new foes arise
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains;
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw."

The most spirited and impassioned of them all, and the most inspired with a sort of prophetic fury, is the one entitled *On the late Massacre in Piedmont*.

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold:
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipp'd stocks and stones,

In the Nineteenth Sonnet, which is also *On his Blindness*, we see the jealous watchfulness of his mind over the use of his [illegible] in the beautiful manner in which he satisfies himself that [illegible] thoughts and intentions are not the least [illegible] Almighty.

[illegible]

[illegible] Mr. Hayley, Lines *On a Portrait of* Mr. Lawrence, [illegible] Thy breast the very seat of [illegible] Benevolence with grace; and for the [illegible] we can add to Hayley, combining [illegible] Shakspeare, Goodness. Here the [illegible] and [illegible] We [illegible] and [illegible] towards

[illegible]

From the hard season gaining? Time will run
On smoother, till Favonius re-inspire
The frozen earth, and clothe in fresh attire
The lily and rose, that neither sow'd nor spun.
What neat repast shall feast us, light and choice,
Of Attic taste, with wine, whence we may rise
To hear the lute well-touch'd, or artful voice
Warble immortal notes and Tuscan air?
He who of these delights can judge, and spare
To interpose them oft, is not unwise."

In the last, *On his deceased Wife*, the allusion to Alcestis is beautiful, and shows how the poet's mind raised and refined his thoughts by exquisite classical conceptions, and how these again were enriched by a passionate reference to actual feelings and images. It is this rare union that gives such voluptuous dignity and touching purity to Milton's delineation of the female character.

"Methought I saw my late espoused saint
Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
Whom Jove's great son to her glad husband gave,
Rescued from death by force, though pale and faint.
Mine, as whom wash'd from spot of child-bed taint
Purification in the old law did save,
And such, as yet once more I trust to have
Full sight of her in Heav'n without restraint,
Came vested all in white, pure as her mind:
Her face was veil'd, yet to my fancied sight
Love, sweetness, goodness in her person shined
So clear, as in no face with more delight:
But O, as to embrace me she inclined,
I waked, she fled, and day brought back my night."

There could not have been a greater mistake or a more unjust piece of criticism than to suppose that Milton only shone on great subjects; and that on ordinary occasions and in a familiar life, his mind was unwieldy, averse to the cultivation of grace and elegance, and unsusceptible of harmless pleasures. The whole tenor of his smaller compositions contradicts this opinion, which however they have been cited to confirm. The notion first got abroad from the bitterness (or vehemence) of his controversial writings, and has been kept up since with little meaning and with less truth. His Letters to Donatus and others

PART II. 4

ESSAY XXIII.

On Coffee-house Politicians.

THERE is a set of people who fairly come under this denomination. They spend their time and their breath in coffee-houses and other places of public resort, hearing or repeating some new thing. They sit with a paper in their hands in the morning, and with a pipe in their mouths in the evening, discussing the contents of it. The Times, the Morning Chronicle, and the Herald are necessary to their existence: in them "they live and move and have their being." The Evening Paper is impatiently expected, and called for at a certain critical minute: the news of the morning become stale and vapid by the dinner-hour. A fresher interest is required, an appetite for the latest-stirring information is excited with the return of their meals; and a glass of old port or humming ale hardly relishes as it ought without the infusion of some lively topic that had its birth with the day, and perishes before night.

Then come in the "sweets of the evening:"—the Queen, the coronation, the last new play, the next fight, the insurrection of the Greeks or Neapolitans, the price of stocks, or death of kings, keep them on the alert till bed-time. No question comes amiss to them that is quite new—none is ever heard of that is at all old.

> "That of an hour's age doth hiss the speaker."

The World before the Flood or the Intermediate State of the Soul are never once thought of—such is the quick succession of subjects, the suddenness and fugitiveness of the interest taken in them, that the Two-penny Post-Bag would be at present looked upon as an old-fashioned publication, and the Battle of Waterloo, like the proverb, is somewhat musty. It is strange that people should take so much interest at one time in what they so soon forget; the truth is, they feel no interest

ing, they must be used immediately, or they will be worth nothing; and the object is to find auditors for the one and customers for the other, neither of which is difficult; since people who have no ideas of their own are glad to hear what any one else has to say, as those who have not free admissions to the play will very obligingly take up with an occasional order.—It sometimes gives one a melancholy but mixed sensation to see one of the better sort of this class of politicians, not without talent or learning, absorbed for fifty years together in the all-engrossing topic of the day; mounting on it for exercise and recreation of his faculties, like the great horse at a riding school, and after his short, improgressive, untired career, dismounting just where he got up; flying abroad in continual consternation on the wings of all the newspapers; waving his arm like a pump-handle in sign of constant change, and spouting out torrents of puddled politics from his mouth; dead to all interests but those of the state; seemingly neither older nor wiser for age; unaccountably enthusiastic, stupidly romantic, and actuated by no other motive than the mechanical operations of the spirit of newsmongering!*

"What things," exclaims Beaumont in his verses to Ben Jonson, "have we not seen done at the Mermaid!"

> —— Then when there hath been thrown
> Wit able enough to justify the town
> For three days past, wit that might warrant be
> For the whole city to talk foolishly!"

* It is not very long ago that I saw two Dissenting Ministers (the *Ultima Thule* of the sanguine, visionary temperament in politics) stuffing their pipes with dried currant leaves, calling it Radical Tobacco, lighting it with a lens in the rays of the sun, and at every puff fancying that they undermined the Boroughmongers, as Trim blew up the army opposed to the Allies! They had *deceived the Senate*. Methinks I see them now, smiling as in scorn of Corruption.

> ——"Dream on, blest pair:
> Yet happier if you knew your happiness,
> And knew to know no more!"

The world of Reform that you doat on, like Berkeley's material world, lives only in your own brain, and long may it live there! Those same Dissenting Ministers throughout the country (I mean the descendants of the old Puritans) are to this hour a sort of Fifth monarchy men: very turbulent fellows, in my opinion altogether incorrigible, and according to the suggestions of others, should be hanged out of the way without judge or jury for the safety of church and state. Marry, hang them! they may or left to die a natural the race is nearly extinct of itself, and can do little more good or

teered to express a more contemporary sentiment, by asking in a tone of mingled confidence and doubt—"But you don't think, Sir, that Gray is to be mentioned as a poet in the same day with my Lord Byron?" The disputants were now at issue: all that resulted was that Gray was set aside as a poet who would not go down among readers of the present day, and his patron treated the works of the noble Bard as mere ephemeral effusions, and spoke of poets that would be admired thirty years hence, which was the farthest stretch of his critical imagination. His antagonist's did not even reach so far. This was the most romantic digression we ever had; and the subject was not afterwards resumed. No one here (generally speaking) has the slightest notion of anything that has happened, that has been said, thought, or done out of his own recollection. It would be in vain to hearken after those "wit-skirmishes," those "brave sublunary things," which were the employment and delight of the Beaumonts and Bens of former times; but we may happily repose on dulness, drift with the tide of nonsense, and gain an agreeable vertigo by lending an ear to endless controversies. The confusion, provided you do not mingle in the fray and try to disentangle it, is amusing and edifying enough. Every species of false wit and spurious argument may be learnt here by potent examples. Whatever observations you hear dropt, have been picked up in the same place or in a kindred atmosphere. There is a kind of conversation made up entirely of scraps and hearsay, as there are a kind of books made up entirely of references to other books. This may account for the frequent contradictions which abound in discourse of persons educated and disciplined wholly in coffee-houses. There is nothing stable or well-grounded in it: it is "nothing but vanity, chaotic vanity." They hear a remark at the Globe which they do not know what to make of; another at the Rainbow in direct opposition to it; and not having time to reconcile them, vent both at the Mitre. In the course of half an hour, if they are not more than ordinarily dull, you are sure to find them on opposite sides of the question. This is the sickening part of it. People do not seem to talk for the sake of expressing their opinions,

on his adversary's name, if it admits of that kind of misconstruction." G—— is admired by the waiter, who is a sleek hand * for his temper in managing an argument. Any one else would perceive that the latent cause is not patience with his antagonist, but satisfaction with himself. I think this unmoved self-complacency, this cavalier smooth simpering indifference is more annoying than the extremest violence or irritability The one shows that your opponent does care something about you, and may be put out of his way by your remarks; the other seems to announce that nothing you can say can shake his opinion a jot, that he has considered the whole of what you have to offer beforehand, and that he is in all respects much wiser and more accomplished than you. Such persons talk to grown people with the same air of patronage and condescension that they do to children. "They will explain"—is a familiar expression with them, thinking you can only differ from them in consequence of misconceiving what they say. Or if you detect them in any error in point of fact (as to acknowledged deficiency in wit or argument, they would smile at the idea) they add some correction to your correction, and thus have the whip-hand of you again, being more correct than you who corrected them. If you hint some obvious oversight, they know what you are going to say, and were aware of the objection before you uttered it :—,"So shall their anticipation prevent your discovery." By being in the right you gain no advantage : by being in the wrong you are entitled to the benefit of their pity or scorn ! It is sometimes curious to see a select group of our little Gotham getting about a knotty point that will bear a wager, as whether Dr. Johnson's Dictionary was originally published in quarto or folio. The confident assertions, the cautious overtures, the length of time demanded to ascertain the fact, the precise terms of the forfeit, the provisos for getting out of paying it at last, lead to a long and inextricable discussion. G—— was however so convinced in his own mind that the

* William, our waiter, is dressed neatly in black, takes in the TICKLER (which many of the gentlemen like to look into), wears, I am told, a diamond-pin in his shirt collar, has a music master to teach him to play on the flageolet two hours before the maids are up, complains of confinement and a delicate constitution, and is a complete Master Stephen in his way.

dull as it was possible to be. I have not seen him of late :—

"For Kais is fled, and our tents are forlorn."

But I thought of him the other day when the news of the death of Bonaparte came, whom we both loved for precisely contrary reasons, he for putting down the rabble of the people, and I because he had put down the rabble of kings. Perhaps this event may rouse him from his lurking-place, where he lies like Reynard, with head declined, and feigned slumbers !*

I had almost forgotten the S—— Tavern. We for some time took C—— for a lawyer, from a certain arguteness of voice and slenderness of neck, and from his having a quibble and a laugh at himself always ready. On inquiry, however, he was found to be a patent-medicine seller, and having leisure in his apprenticeship, and a forwardness of parts, he had taken to study Blackstone and the Statutes at large. On appealing to M—— for his opinion on this matter, he observed pithily, "I don't like so much law : the gentlemen here seem fond of law, but I have

* His account of Dr. L——— was prodigious—of his occult sagacity, of his eyes prominent and wild like a hare's, fugacious of followers, of the arts by which he had left the City to lure the patients that he wanted after him to the West-End, of the ounce of tea that he purchased by stratagem as an unusual treat to his guest, and of the narrow winding staircase, from the height of which he contemplated in security the imaginary approach of duns. He was a large, plain, fair-faced Moravian preacher, turned physician. He was an honest man, but vain of he knew not what. He was once sitting where Sarratt was playing a game at chess without seeing the board : and after remaining some time absorbed in silent wonder, he turned suddenly to me and said, "Do you know, Mr. H———, that I think there is something I could do?" "Well, what is that?" "Why perhaps you would not guess, but I think I could dance, I'm sure I could : ay, I could dance like Vestris!" Sarratt, who was a man of various accomplishments (among others one of the Fancy), afterwards bared his arm to convince us of his muscular strength, and Mrs. L———going out of the room with another lady said, "Do you know, Madam, the Doctor is a great jumper!" Molière could not outdo this. Never shall I forget his pulling off his coat to eat beef-steaks on equal terms with Martin B———. Life is short, but full of mirth and pastime, did we not so soon forget what we have laughed at, perhaps that we may not remember what we have cried at! Sarratt, the chess player, was an extraordinary man. He had the same tenacious, epileptic faculty in other things that he had at chess, and could no more get any other ideas out of his mind than he could those of the figures on the board. He was a great reader, but had not the least taste. Indeed the violence of his memory tyrannized over and destroyed all power of selection. He could repeat Ossian by heart, without knowing the best passage from the worst : and did not perceive he was tiring you to death by giving an account of the breed, education, and manners of fighting dogs for hours together. The sense of reality quite superseded the distinction between the pleasurable and the painful. He was altogether a mechanical philosopher.

is setting out afresh with the commencement of the French Revolution five and twenty years ago, as if on an untried experiment. He minds nothing but the formal agreement of his premises and his conclusions, and does not stick at obstacles in the way nor consequences in the end. If there was but one side of the question, he would be always in the right. He casts up one column of the account to admiration, but totally forgets and rejects the other. His ideas lie like square pieces of wood in his brain, and may be said to be piled up on a stiff architectural principle, perpendicularly, and at right angles. There is no inflection, no modification, no graceful embellishment, no Corinthian capitals. I never heard him agree to two propositions together, or to more than half a one at a time. His rigid love of truth bends to nothing but his habitual love of disputation. He puts one in mind of one of those long-headed politicians and frequenters of coffee-houses mentioned in Berkeley's Minute Philosopher, who would make nothing of such old-fashioned fellows as Plato and Aristotle. He has the new light strong upon him, and he knocks other people down with its solid beams. He denies that he has got certain views out of Cobbett, though he allows that there are excellent ideas occasionally to be met with in that writer. It is a pity that this enthusiastic and unqualified regard to truth should be accompanied with an equal exactness of expenditure and unrelenting eye to the main-chance. He brings a bunch of radishes with him for cheapness, and gives a band of musicians at the door a penny, observing that he likes their performance better than all the Opera-squalling. This brings the severity of his political principles into question, if not into contempt. He would abolish the National Debt from motives of personal economy, and objects to Mr. Canning's pension because it perhaps takes a farthing a year out of his own pocket. A great deal of radical reasoning has its source in this feeling.—He bestows no small quantity of his tediousness upon M——, on whose mind all these formulas and diagrams fall like seed on stony ground: "while the manna is descending," he shakes his ears, and in the intervals of the debate, insinuates an objection, and calls for another half-pint. I have sometimes said

formerly at the Cider-Cellar in a very lively way. He has doubts, however, as to that sort of learning. On my saying that I had never seen the Greek Professor but once, at the Library of the London Institution, when he was dressed in an old rusty black coat, with cobwebs hanging to the skirts of it, and with a large patch of coarse brown paper covering the whole length of his nose, looking for all the world like a drunken carpenter, and talking to one of the Proprietors with an air of suavity, approaching to condescension, M—— could not help expressing some little uneasiness for the credit of classical literature. "I submit, Sir, whether common sense is not the principal thing? What is the advantage of genius and learning if they are of no use in the conduct of life?"—M—— is one who loves the hours that usher in the morn, when a select few are left in twos and threes like stars before the break of day, and when the discourse and the ale are "aye growing better and better." W——, M——, and myself were all that remained one evening. We had sat together several hours without being tired of one another's company. The conversation turned on the Beauties of Charles the Second's Court at Windsor, and from thence to Count Grammont, their gallant and gay historian. We took our favorite passages in turn —one preferring that of Killigrew's country-cousin, who having been resolutely refused by Miss Warminster (one of the Maids of Honor) when he found she had been unexpectedly brought to bed, fell on his knees and thanked God that now she might take compassion on him—another insisting that the Chevalier Hamilton's assignation with Lady Chesterfield, when she kept him all night shivering in an old out-house, was better. Jacob Hall's prowess was not forgotten, nor the story of Miss Stuart's garters. I was getting on in my way with that delicate *endroit*, in which Miss Churchill is first introduced at court and is besieged (as a matter of course) by the Duke of York, who was gallant as well as bigoted on system. His assiduities however soon slackened, owing (it is said) to her having a pale, thin face; till one day, as they were riding out hunting together, she fell from her horse, and was taken up almost lifeless. The whole assembled court were thrown by this event into admiration that such a body should

belong to such a face? (so transcendant a pattern was she of the female form) and the Duke was fixed. This I contended was [illegible] and grace, the [illegible], and said I could conceive of nothing finer than the idea of a young person in [illegible] situation, who was the object of indifference or scorn from outward appearance, with the proud suppressed consciousness of a Goddess-like symmetry, kept up by "fear and niceness, the hand-maids of all women," from the wonder and worship of mankind. I said so then, and I think so now: my tongue grew wanton in the praise of this passage, and I believe [illegible] comparisons. W—— then spoke of Lucius Apuleius and his Golden Ass, which contains the story of Cupid and Psyche, with other matter rich and rare, and went on to the romances of Heliodorus, Theagenes and Chariclea. This, as he affirmed, [illegible] Chariclea, [illegible] of Love and Wine appear in all their pristine [illegible] youth and grace, crowned and worshipped as of yore. [illegible] M—— [illegible] W—— [illegible] Mr. M—— [illegible] Mr. H—— [illegible] Mr. A—— [illegible] W—— [illegible] M—— [illegible] H—— [illegible] He was always a pleasant [illegible] A—— [illegible] English-

[illegible]

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man. I do not mean that the same character applies to all Scotchmen, or to all Englishmen. H—— was of the Pipe-Office (not unfitly appointed), and in his cheerfuller cups would delight to speak of a widow and a bowling-green, that ran in his head to the last. "What is the good of those things now?" said the man of utility. "I don't know," replied the other, quaffing another glass of sparkling ale, and with a lambent fire playing in his eye and round his bald forehead—(he had a head that Sir Joshua would have made something bland and genial of)—"I don't know, but they were delightful to me at the time, and are still pleasant to talk and think of."—*Such a one*, in Touchstone's phrase, *is a natural philosopher;* and in nine cases out of ten that sort of philosophy is the best! I could enlarge this sketch, such as it is; but to prose on to the end of the chapter might prove less profitable than tedious.

I like very well to sit in a room where there are people talking on subjects I know nothing of, if I am only allowed to sit silent and as a spectator. But I do not much like to join in the conversation, except with people and on subjects to my taste. Sympathy is necessary to society. To look on, a variety of faces, humors, and opinions is sufficient: to mix with others, agreement as well as variety is indispensable. What makes good society? I answer, in one word, real fellowship. Without a similitude of tastes, acquirements; and pursuits (whatever may be the difference of tempers and characters), there can be no intimacy or even casual intercourse worth the having. What makes the most agreeable party? A number of people with a number of ideas in common, "yet so as with a difference;" that is, who can put one or more subjects which they have all studied in the greatest variety of entertaining or useful lights. Or in other words, a succession of good things said with good humor, and addressed to the understandings of those who hear them, make the most desirable conversation. Ladies, lovers, beaux, wits, philosophers, the fashionable or the vulgar, are the fittest company for one another. The discourse at Randall's is the best for boxers: that at Long's for lords and loungers. I prefer Hunt's conversation almost to any other person's, because, with a familiar range of subjects, he colors with a totally new and sparkling

good company for this reason. He immediately establishes the principle of the division of labor in this respect, wherever he comes. He takes his cue as speaker, and the rest of the party theirs as listeners—a "Circean herd"—without any previous arrangement having been gone through. I will just add that there can be no good society without perfect freedom from affectation and constraint. If the unreserved communication of feeling or opinion leads to offensive familiarity, it is not well. But it is no better where the absence of offensive remarks arises only from formality and an assumed respectfulness of manner.

I do not think there is anything deserving the name of society to be found out of London: and that for the two following reasons. First, there is *neighborhood* elsewhere, accidental or unavoidable acquaintance: people are thrown together by chance or grow together like trees; but you can pick your society nowhere but in London. The very persons that of all others you would wish to associate with in almost every line of life (or at least of intellectual pursuit), are to be met with there. It is hard if out of a million of people you cannot find half a dozen to your liking. Individuals may seem lost and hid in the size of the place: but in fact from this very circumstance you are within two or three miles' reach of persons that without it you would be some hundreds apart from. Secondly, London is the only place in which each individual in company is treated according to his value in company, and to that only. In every other part of the kingdom he carries another character about with him, which supersedes the intellectual or social one. It is known in Manchester or Liverpool what every man in the room is worth in land or money; what are his connexions and prospects in life—and this gives a character of servility or arrogance, of mercenariness or impertinence to the whole of provincial intercourse. You laugh not in proportion to a man's wit, but his wealth: you have to consider not what, but whom you contradict. You speak by the pound, and are heard by the rood. In the metropolis there is neither time nor inclination for these remote calculations. Every man depends on the quantity of sense, wit, or good manners he brings into society for the reception he meets with in it. A member of parliament soon finds his level as a commoner:

abstract definition.

ESSAY XXIV.

On the Aristocracy of Letters.

"Ha! here's three of us are sophisticated:—off, you lendings."——

THERE is such a thing as an aristocracy or privileged order in letters, which has sometimes excited my wonder, and sometimes my spleen. We meet with authors who have never done anything, but who have a vast reputation for what they could have done. Their names stand high, and are in everybody's mouth, but their works are never heard of, or had better remain undiscovered for the sake of their admirers.—*Stat nominis umbra*—their pretensions are lofty and unlimited, as they have nothing to rest upon, or because it is impossible to confront them with the proofs of their deficiency. If you inquire farther, and insist upon some act of authorship to establish the claims of these Epicurean votaries of the Muses, you find that they had a great reputation at Cambridge, that they were senior wranglers or successful prize-essayists, that they visit at —— House, and to support that honor, must be supposed of course to occupy the first rank in the world of letters.* It is possible, however, that they have some manuscript work in hand, which is of too much importance (and the writer has too much at stake in publishing

* Lord H—— had made a diary (in the manner of Boswell) of the conversation held at his house, and read it at the end of a week *pro bono publico*. Sir J— M—— made a considerable figure in it, and a celebrated poet none at all, merely answering Yes and No. With this result he was by no means satisfied, and talked incessantly from that day forward. At the end of the week he asked, with some anxiety and triumph, if his Lordship had continued his diary, expecting himself to shine in "the first row of the rubric." To which his Noble Patron answered in the negative, with an intimation that it had not appeared to him worth while. Our poet was thus thrown again into the back ground, and Sir James remained master of the field!

reads Cicero once a year to keep up the purity of his Latinity. A third makes the indecency pass for the depth of his researches and for a high gusto in *virtù*, till from his seeing nothing in the finest remains of ancient art, the world by the merest accident find out that there is nothing in him. There is scarcely anything that a grave face with an impenetrable manner will not accomplish, and whoever is weak enough to impose upon himself, will have wit enough to impose upon the public—particularly if he can make it their interest to be deceived by shallow boasting, and contrives not to hurt their self-love by sterling acquirements. Do you suppose that the understood translation of Thucydides costs its supposed author nothing? A select party of friends and admirers dine with him once a week at a magnificent town-mansion, or a more elegant and picturesque retreat in the country. They broach their Horace and their old hock, and sometimes allude with a considerable degree of candor to the defects of works which are brought out by contemporary writers—the ephemeral offspring of haste and necessity!

Among other things, the learned languages are a ready passport to this sort of unmeaning, unanalysed reputation. They presently lift a man up among the celestial constellations, the signs of the Zodiac (as it were) and third heaven of inspiration, from whence he looks down on those who are toiling on in this lower sphere, and earning their bread by the sweat of their brain, at leisure and in scorn. If the graduates in this way condescend to express their thoughts in English, it is understood to be *infra dignitatem*—such light and unaccustomed essays do not fit the ponderous gravity of their pen—they only draw to advantage and with full justice to themselves in the bow of the ancients. Their native-tongue is to them strange, inelegant, unapt, and crude. They "cannot command it to any utterance of harmony. They have not the skill." This is true enough, but you must not say so, under a heavy penalty—the displeasure of pedants and blockheads. It would be sacrilege against the privileged classes, the Aristocracy of Letters. What! will you affirm that a profound Latin scholar, a perfect Grecian, cannot write a page of common sense or grammar?—Is it not to be presumed, by all the charters of the Universities and the foundations of grammar-schools, that

he will [illegible] and with [illegible] He who [illegible] of the most [illegible] vulgar [illegible] practice — but only [illegible] the elegance of the Latinity, it is well that [illegible] become a classical and standard [illegible] Thus defects are "mustered" into excellences, and they [illegible] require you at your peril, to pay prescriptive homage [illegible] and [illegible] critical [illegible] because the [illegible] the character of the first or second Greek or Latin [illegible] If you do not swear to the truth [illegible] and make [illegible] a [illegible] Thus the man who [illegible] authority of a class super- [illegible] of reasoning, to [illegible] writer of true and original genius [illegible] the learned [illegible] Hobbes has [illegible] well stated the same thing,

[illegible]

These preposterous and unfounded claims of mere scholars to [illegible] when [illegible] was a time when [illegible] natural [illegible]

give others credit for the ideas they have borrowed or have come into direct possession of, rather than for those that originally belong to them and are exclusively their own. The merit in them and the implied inferiority in ourselves is less. Learning is a kind of external appendage or transferable property—

"'T was mine, 't is his, and may be any man's"—

Genius and understanding are a man's self, an integrant part of his personal identity; and the title to these last, as it is the most difficult to be ascertained, is also the most grudgingly acknowledged. Few persons would pretend to deny that Porson had more Greek than they. It was a question of fact which might be put to the immediate proof, and could not be gainsaid. But the meanest frequenter of the Cider-cellar or the Hole in the Wall would be inclined, in his own conceit, to dispute the palm of wit or sense with him; and indemnify his self-complacency for the admiration paid to living learning by significant hints to friends and casual droppers-in, that the greatest men, when you came to know them, were not without their weak sides as well as others. Pedants, I will add here, talk to the vulgar as pedagogues talk to school-boys, on an understood principle of condescension and superiority, and therefore make little progress in the knowledge of men or things. While they fancy they are accommodating themselves to, or else assuming airs of importance over, inferior capacities, these inferior capacities are really laughing at them. There can be no true superiority but what arises out of the presupposed ground of equality; there can be no improvement but from the free communication and comparing of ideas. Kings and nobles, for this reason, receive little benefit from society—where all is submission on one side, and condescension on the other. The mind strikes out truth by collision, as steel strikes fire from the flint!

There are whole families who are born classical, and are entered in the heralds' college of reputation by the right of consanguinity. Literature, like nobility, runs in the blood. There is the B—— family. There is no end of it or its pretensions. It produces wits, scholars, novelists, musicians, artists in "num-

> "Let but a lord once own the happy lines:
> How the wit brightens, and the style refines!"

He smiles at the high-flown praise or petty cavils of little men. Does he make a slip in decorum, which Milton declares to be the principal thing? His proud crest and armorial bearings support him:—no bend-sinister slurs his poetical escutcheon! Is he dull, or does he put off some trashy production on the public? It is not charged to his account, as a deficiency which he must make good at the peril of his admirers. His Lordship is not answerable for the negligence or extravagances of his Muse. He "bears a charmed reputation, which must not yield" like one of vulgar birth. The noble Bard is for this reason scarcely vulnerable to the critics. The double barrier of his pretensions baffles their puny timid efforts. Strip off some of his tarnished laurels, and the coronet appears glittering beneath: restore them, and it still shines through with keener lustre. In fact, his Lordship's blaze of reputation culminates from his rank and place in society. He sustains two lofty and imposing characters; and in order to simplify the process of our admiration, and "leave no rubs or botches in the way," we equalize his pretensions, and take it for granted that he must be as superior to other men in genius as he is in birth. Or, to give a more familiar solution of the enigma, the Poet and the Peer agree to honor each other's acceptances on the bank of Fame, and sometimes cozen the town to some tune between them.—Really, however, and with all his privileges, Lord Byron might as well not have written that strange letter about Pope. I could not afford it, poor as I am. Why does he pronounce, *ex cathedrâ* and robed, that Cowper is no poet? Cowper was a gentleman and of noble family like his critic. He was a teacher of morality as well as a describer of nature, which is more than his Lordship is. His John Gilpin will last as long as Beppo, and his verses to Mary are not less touching than the Farewell. If I had ventured upon such an assertion as this, it would have been worse for me than finding out a borrowed line in the Pleasures of Hope.

There is not a more helpless or more despised animal than a mere author, without any extrinsic advantages of birth, breeding,

whose mealy coat no moth can corrupt nor blight can wither. The poet Keats had not this sort of protection for his person—he lay bare to weather—the serpent stung him, and the poison-tree dropped upon this little western flower:—when the mercenary servile crew approached him, he had no pedigree to show them, no rent-roll to hold out in reversion for their praise: he was not in any great man's train, nor the butt and puppet of a lord—he could only offer them the "fairest flowers of the season, carnations and streaked gilliflowers,"—"rue for remembrance and pansies for thoughts"—they recked not of his gift, but tore him with hideous shouts and laughter,

"Nor could the Muse protect her son!"

Unless an author has an establishment of his own, or is entered on that of some other person, he will hardly be allowed to write English or to spell his own name. To be well-spoken of, he must enlist under some standard; he must belong to some *coterie*. He must get the *esprit de corps* on his side: he must have literary bail in readiness. Thus they prop one another's ricketty heads at Murray's shop, and a spurious reputation, like false argument, runs in a circle. Croker affirms that Gifford is sprightly, and Gifford that Croker is genteel: D'Israeli that Jacob is wise, and Jacob that D'Israeli is good-natured. A Member of Parliament must be answerable that you are not dangerous or dull before you can be of the *entrée*. You must commence toad-eater to have your observations attended to; if you are independent, unconnected, you will be regarded as a poor creature. Your opinion is honest, you will say: then ten to one, it is not profitable. It is at any rate your own. So much the worse; for then it is not the world's. T——— is a very tolerable barometer in this respect. He knows nothing, hears everything, and repeats just what he hears; so that you may guess pretty well from this round-faced echo what is said by others! Almost everything goes by presumption and appearances. "Did you not think Mr. B——'s language very elegant?"—I thought he bowed very low. "Did you not think him remarkably well-behaved?"—He was unexceptionably dressed. "But were not Mr. C——'s manners quite insinuating?"—He said nothing. "You will at least

of those of others. There is ———, the responsible conductor of several works of taste and erudition, yet (God knows) without an idea in his head relating to any one of them. He is learned by proxy, and successful from sheer imbecility. If he were to get the smallest smattering of the departments which are under his control, he would betray himself from his desire to shine; but as it is, he leaves others to do all the drudgery for him. He signs his name in the title-page or at the bottom of a vignette, and nobody suspects any mistake. This contractor for useful and ornamental literature once offered me Two Guineas for a Life and Character of Shakspeare, with an admission to his *conversationes*. I went once. There was a collection of learned lumber, of antiquaries, lexicographers, and other Illustrious Obscure, and I had given up the day for lost, when in dropped Jack T. of the Sun—(Who would dare to deny that he was "the Sun of our table?")—and I had nothing now to do but hear and laugh. Mr. T——— knows most of the good things that have been said in the metropolis for the last thirty years, and is in particular an excellent retailer of the humors and extravagances of his old friend, Peter Pindar. He had recounted a series of them, each rising above the other in a sort of magnificent burlesque and want of literal preciseness, to a medley of laughing and sour faces, when on his proceeding to state a joke of a practical nature by the said Peter, a Mr. —— (I forget the name) objected to the moral of the story, and to the whole texture of Mr. T——'s *facetiæ*—upon which our host, who had till now supposed that all was going on swimmingly, thought it time to interfere and give a turn to the conversation by saying—"Why yes, Gentlemen, what we have hitherto heard fall from the lips of our friend has been no doubt entertaining and highly agreeable in its way: but perhaps we have had enough of what is altogether delightful and pleasant and light and laughable in conduct. Suppose, therefore, we were to shift the subject, and talk of what is serious and moral and industrious and laudable in character—Let us talk of Mr. Tomkins, the Penman!"—This staggered the gravest of us, broke up our dinner-party, and we went up stairs to tea. So much for the didactic vein of one of our principal guides in the embellished walks of modern taste, and master-manufacturers of letters. He

had Pericles' gravity had been a never-failing resource when he was at a pinch—to move the pike-staff and Mr. Tomkinson's Protestantism to this day nowhere but in Sir Joshua's pictures of them.'

To complete the natural Aristocracy of Letters, we only want a Royal Society of Authors!

ESSAY XXV.

On Criticism.

Criticism is an art that undergoes a great variety of changes, and aims at different objects at different times.

At first, it is generally satisfied to give an opinion whether a work is good or bad, and to quote a passage or two in support of this opinion: afterwards, it is bound to assign the reasons of its decision and to analyse supposed beauties or defects with microscopic minuteness. A critic does nothing now-a-days who does not try to torture the most obvious expression into a thousand meanings, and enter into a circuitous explanation of all that can be urged for or against its being in the best or worst style possible. His object indeed is not to do justice to his author, whom he treats with very little ceremony, but to do himself homage, and to show his acquaintance with all the topics and resources of criticism. If he recurs to the stipulated subject in the end, it is not till after he has exhausted his budget of general knowledge; and he establishes his own claims first in an elaborate inaugural dissertation *de omni scibile et quibusdam aliis*, before he deigns to bring forward the pretensions of the original candidate for praise, who is only the second figure in the piece. We may sometimes see articles of this sort, in which no allusion whatever is made to the work under sentence of death, after the first announcement of the title page; and I apprehend it would be a clear improvement on this species of nominal criticism, to give stated periodical accounts of works that had never appeared at all, which would save the hapless author the mortification of writing, and his reviewer the trouble of reading them. If the real author is made of so little account by the modern critic, he is scarcely more an object of regard to the modern reader; and it must be confessed that after a dozen close-packed pages of subtle metaphysical dis-

tinction or solemn didactic declamation, in which the disembodied principles of all arts and sciences float before the imagination in undefined profusion, the eye turns with impatience and indifference to the imperfect embryo specimens of them, and the hopeless attempts to realize this splendid jargon in one poor work by one poor author, which is given up to summary execution with as little justice as pity. "As when a well-graced actor leaves the stage, men's eyes are idly bent on him that enters next"—so it is here. Whether this state of the press is not a serious abuse and a violent encroachment in the republic of letters is more than I shall pretend to determine. The truth is, that as the quantity of works that issue from the press, it is utterly impossible they should all be read by all sorts of people. There must be *testes* for the public, who must have a discretionary power vested in them, for which it is difficult to make them properly accountable. Authors in proportion to their numbers become not formidable but despicable. They would not be heard of if not covered from the crowd without the critic's aid, and all complaints of ill-treatment are vain. He constitutes them as powerful as in his bounty for any pittance of praise, and in general sets them upon stilts for his wit and spleen, or uses them as a stalking-horse to convey his own favorite notions and opinions, which he cares to by this means without the possibility of censure or reply. He looks upon his literary readers much as Peter Pounce looked upon Parson Adams as a waste of powder and shot, as a necessary nuisance, to be put in the vehicle of fame, which is the "aurea quadriga" of knowledge and virtue, but which he may direct with a steady hand, or overturn in the ditch at his pleasure. He exercises only his fancy or invention. He naturally grows attached to his own productions, and wishes to be thought to have purchased admiration by his labours, and wisdom.—

> "Whose judgment like the heavenly moon presides,
> And like the sun the great example rises."

But he is not to be "a servant of the public," or a mere drudge. They are not to call for "the same thing over and over," and have it. They are not to be "indifferent whether they have wit or not," and yet be critical in the quality. He is not to be

to the sentiments of others, they will think you a very silly fellow or a mere pretender. A sweeping, unqualified assertion ends all controversy, and sets opinion at rest. A sharp, sententious, cavalier, dogmatical tone is therefore necessary, even in self-defence, to the office of a reviewer. If you do not deliver your oracles without hesitation, how are the world to receive them on trust and without inquiry? People read to have something to talk about, and "to seem to know that which they do not." Consequently, there cannot be too much dialectics, and debateable matter, too much pomp and paradox in a review. *To elevate and surprise* is the great rule for producing a dramatic or a critical effect. The more you startle the reader, the more he will be able to startle others with a succession of smart intellectual shocks. The most admired of our Reviews is saturated with this sort of electrical matter, which is regularly played off so as to produce a good deal of astonishment and a strong sensation in the public mind. The intrinsic merits of an author are a question of very subordinate consideration to the keeping up the character of the work and supplying the town with a sufficient number of grave or brilliant topics for the consumption of the next three months!

This decided and paramount tone in criticism is the growth of the present century, and was not at all the fashion in that calm peaceable period when the Monthly Review bore "sole sovereign sway and masterdom" over all literary productions. Though nothing can be said against the respectability or usefulness of that publication during its long and almost exclusive enjoyment of the public favor, yet the style of criticism adopted in it is such as to appear slight and unsatisfactory to a modern reader. The writers, instead of "outdoing termagant or out-Heroding Herod," were somewhat precise and prudish, gentle almost to a fault, full of candor and modesty,

"And of their port as meek as is a maid!"*

* A Mr. Rose and the Rev. Dr. Kippis were for many years its principal support. Mrs. Rose (I have heard my father say) contributed the Monthly Catalogue. There is sometimes a certain tartness and the woman's tongue in it. It is said of Gray's Elegy—"This little poem, however humble its pretensions, is not without elegance or merit." The characters of prophet and critic are not always united.

There was notice of that Drawcansir working going on there, that there is now : no scalping of authors, no hacking and hewing of their Lives and Opinions, except that they used the word of Tristam Shandy, Gent., rather scurvily ; which was to be expected. All, however, had a show of courtesy and good manners. The satire was covert and artfully insinuated ; the praise was short and sweet. We meet with no particular theories ; no profound analysis of principles ; no unsparing exposure of the least discrepancy of execution from them. It was deemed sufficient to recommend the work in general terms, "This is an agreeable volume," or, "This is a work of great learning and research," to set forth the style and table of contents, and proceed without further preface to some appropriate extracts, for the most part occurring in connexion with the author's text, but now and then interspersed an objection to maintain appearances and assert the impartiality of the critic. This cursory manner of hinting approbation or dissent would make but a lame figure at present. We must have it not only announced now that "this is an agreeable or a learned work," but we must have it explained at full length, and so as to silence all cavillers, in what the agreeableness or learning of the work consists : the author must be ranked in a classical file, living or extinct, examples of writers must be characterised nicely and pointedly *distinguished* from one another ; the various species of writing must be investigated and ascertained in comparison with others ; the principles of taste, the common sensations, the structure of the human faculties, all must be searched and ransacked. The multitude of critics, like the confusion of tongues, supposes the existence of Babel : there is no need of the one of every one's mouth, nor the answer to every idle, unintelligible argument and criticism. The former of these was wonderfully calculated to make those who merely wanted to be thought to write, write on ; the latter was well suited to the genius of the country : the press teemed with books, which no one read to the end, but which every one thought he could read to the end, if he would ; and which, therefore, every one commended, and no one blamed, as he thought it was not worth while.

Nothing can be more [illegible] and meagre than the criticisms of [illegible] writers, [illegible] of translations [illegible] principles which prevailed [illegible] Dryden's

Prefaces,* and in the criticisms written on the model of the French school about a century ago. A genuine criticism should, as I take it, reflect the colors, the light and shade, the soul and body of a work:—here we have nothing but its superficial plan and elevation, as if a poem were a piece of formal architecture. We are told something of the plot or fable, of the moral, and of the observance or violation of the three unities of time, place, and action; and perhaps a word or two is added on the dignity of the persons or the baldness of the style: but we no more know, after reading one of these complacent *tirades*, what the essence of the work is, what passion has been touched, or how skilfully, what tone and movement the author's mind imparts to his subject or receives from it, than if we had been reading a homily or a gazette. That is, we are left quite in the dark as to the feelings of pleasure or pain to be derived from the genius of the performance or the manner in which it appeals to the imagination: we know to a nicety how it squares with the thread-bare rules of composition, not in the least how it affects the principles of taste. We know everything about the work, and nothing of it. The critic takes good care not to balk the reader's fancy by anticipating the effect which the author has aimed at producing. To be sure, the works so handled were often worthy of their commentators: they had the form of imagination without the life or power; and when any one had gone regularly through the number of acts into which they were divided, the measure in which they were written, or the story on which they were founded, there was little else to be said about them. It is curious to observe the effect which the Paradise Lost had on this class of critics, like throwing a tub to a whale: they could make nothing of it. "It was out of all plumb—not one of the angles at the four corners was a right angle!" They did not seek for, nor would they much relish the marrow of poetry it contained. Like polemics in religion, they had discarded the essentials of fine writing for the outward form and points of controversy. They

* There are some splendid exceptions to this censure. His comparison between Ovid and Virgil, and his character of Shakspeare, are masterpieces of their kind.

were at issue with Genius and Nature by what route and in what garb they should enter the Temple of the Muses. Accordingly we find that Dryden had no other way of satisfying himself of the pretensions of Milton in the epic style but by translating his [illegible] works into rhyme and dramatic dialogue.*—So there are connoisseurs who give you the subject, the grouping, the perspective, and all the mechanical circumstances of a picture; but never say a word about the expression. The reason is, they see the former, but not the latter. There are persons, however, who cannot employ themselves better than in taking an inventory of works of art (they want a faculty for higher studies), as there are works of art, so called, which seem to have been composed expressly with an eye to such a class of connoisseurs. In them are to be found no nameless beauties thrown away upon the vulgar gaze; no graces snatched beyond the reach of art; nothing but what the merest pretender may note down in a pocket-book or a common-place book, just as it is before them. Place one of these half-informed, imperfectly organized spectators before a tall canvas with groups on groups of figures, of the size of life, and engaged in a complicated action, of which they know the name and all the particulars, and there are no bounds to their burst of involuntary enthusiasm. They mount on the stilts of the subject and ascend the highest Heaven of Invention, from whence they see sights and hear revelations which they communicate with all the fervor of plenary explanation to those who may be disposed to attend to their raptures. They float with a wide, expanded, lofty circle; they sweep over the canvas at large, without once condescending to pause at any-

* [illegible]

thing of less magnitude than a group or a colossal figure. The face forms no part of their collective inquiries; or so that it occupies only a sixth or an eighth proportion of the whole body, all is according to the received rules of composition. Point to a divine portrait of Titian, to an angelic head of Guido, close by—they see and heed it not. What are the "looks commercing with the skies," the soul speaking in the face, to them? It asks another and an inner sense to comprehend them; but for the trigonometry of painting, nature has constituted them indifferently well. They take a stand on the distinction between portrait and history, and there they are spell-bound. Tell them that there can be no fine history without portraiture, that the painter must proceed from that ground to the one above it, and that a hundred bad heads cannot make one good historical picture, and they will not believe you, though the thing is obvious to any gross capacity. Their ideas always fly to the circumference, and never fix at the centre. Art must be on a grand scale; according to them, the whole is greater than a part, and the greater necessarily implies the less. The outline is in this view of the matter the same thing as the filling-up, and "the limbs and flourishes of a discourse" the substance. Again, the same persons make an absolute distinction, without knowing why, between high and low subjects. Say that you would as soon have Murillo's *Two Beggar-Boys* at the Dulwich Gallery as almost any picture in the world, that is, that it would be one you would choose out of ten (had you the choice), and they reiterate upon you, that surely a low subject cannot be of equal value with a high one. It is in vain that you turn to the picture: they keep to the class. They have eyes, but see not; and upon their principles of refined taste, would be just as good judges of the merit of the picture without seeing it as with that supposed advantage. They know what the subject is *from the catalogue!*—Yet it is not true, as Lord Byron asserts, that execution is everything, and the class or subject nothing. The highest subjects, equally well-executed (which, however, rarely happens), are the best. But the power of execution, the manner of seeing nature, is one thing, and may be so superlative (if you are only able to judge of it) as to countervail every disadvantage of subject. Raphael's storks in the Miraculous Draught of Fishes, exulting

in the event, are finer than the head of Christ would have been in almost any other hands. The cant of criticism is on the other side of the question; because execution depends on various degrees of power in the artist, and a knowledge of it on various degrees of feeling and discrimination in you: but to commence artist or connoisseur in the grand style at once, without any distinction of qualifications whatever, it is only necessary for the first to choose his subject, and for the last to pin his faith on the sublimity of the performance, for both to look down with ineffable contempt on the painters and admirers of subjects of low life. I remember a young Scotchman once trying to prove to me that Mrs. Dickons was a superior singer to Miss Stephens, because the former excelled in sacred music, and the latter did not. At that rate, that is, if it is the singing sacred music that gives the preference, Miss Stephens would only have to sing sacred music to surpass herself and vie with her pretended rival; for this the young man said all sacred music is equally good, and therefore better than any other. I grant that Madame Catalani's singing of sacred music is superior to Miss Stephens's ballad-singing, because her singing is better altogether, and an ocean of sound is more wonderful than a simple stream of dulcet harmonies. In singing the last verse of "God save the King" not long ago, her voice [illegible] above the whole confused noise of the orchestra, [illegible] ture!

Some kinds of criticism are as much too insipid as others are too pragmatical. It is not easy to combine point with solidity, [illegible] in poisoning the sources of your satisfaction, and putting you out [illegible]

till it is varnished over with the slime of servility, and thrown into a state of unnatural activity by the venom of the most rancorous bigotry. The eminent professors in this grovelling department are at first merely out of sorts with themselves, and vent their spleen in little interjections and contortions of phrase:—cry *Pish* at a lucky hit, and *Hem* at a fault, are smart on personal defects, and sneer at "Beauty out of favor and on crutches"—are thrown into an ague-fit by hearing the name of a rival, start back with horror at any approach to their morbid pretensions like Justice Woodcock with his gouty limbs—rifle the flowers of the Della Cruscan school, and give you in their stead, as models of pleasing pastoral style, Verses upon Anna—which you may see in the notes to the Baviad and Mæviad. All this is like the fable of the *Kitten and the Leaves*. But when they get their brass collar on and shake their bells of office, they set up their backs like the Great Cat Rodilardus, and pounce upon men and things. Wo to any little heedless reptile of an author that ventures across their path without a safe-conduct from the Board of Control. They snap him up at a mouthful, and sit licking their lips, stroking their whiskers, and rattling their bells over the imaginary fragments of their devoted prey, to the alarm and astonishment of the whole breed of literary, philosophical, and revolutionary vermin, that were naturalised in this country by a Prince of Orange and an Elector of Hanover a hundred years ago.* When one of these pampered, sleek, "demure-looking, spring-nailed, velvet-pawed, green-eyed" critics makes his King and Country parties to this sort of sport literary, you have not much chance of escaping out of his clutches in a whole skin. Treachery becomes a principle with them, and mischief a conscience, that is, a livelihood. They not only *damn* the work in the lump, but vilify and traduce the author, and substitute lying abuse and sheer malignity for sense and satire. To have written a popular work is as much as a man's character is worth, and sometimes his life, if he does not happen to be on the right side of the question. The way in which they set about *stultifying* an adversary

* The intelligent reader will be pleased to understand, that there is here a tacit allusion to Squire Western's significant phrase of *Hanover Rats*.

is not to accuse you of faults, or to exaggerate those which you may really have, but they deny that you have any merits at all, least of all those that the world have given you credit for; bless themselves from understanding a single sentence in a whole volume; and unless you are ready to subscribe to all their articles of peace, will not allow you to be qualified to write your own name. It is not a question of literary discussion, but of political proscription. It is a mark of loyalty and patriotism to extend no quarter to those of the opposite party. Instead of replying to your arguments, they call you names, put words and opinions into your mouth which you have never uttered, and consider it a species of misprision of treason to admit that a Whig author knows anything of common sense or English. The only way to put a stop to this unfair mode of dealing would perhaps be to make a few reprisals by way of example. The Court-party boast some writers who have a reputation to lose, and who would not like to have their names dragged through the kennel of party abuse and vulgar obloquy. What silenced the masked battery of Blackwood's Magazine was the implication of the name of Sir Walter Scott in some remarks upon it — an honour of which it seems that extraordinary person was not ambitious — [illegible] was a distinction and an [illegible] in that praise-worthy [illegible] own times, when I was [illegible] Pope and Dryden, and [illegible]

[illegible]

lish prose—thinking all other writers sophisticated and naught—the former prefer the more ornamented and sparkling periods of Junius or Gibbon. It is to no purpose to think of bringing about an understanding between these opposite factions. It is a natural difference of temperament and constitution of mind. The one will never relish the antithetical point and perpetual glitter of the artificial prose-style; as the plain unperverted English idiom will always appear trite and insipid to the others. A toleration, not an uniformity of opinion is as much as can be expected in this case: and both sides may acknowledge, without imputation on their taste or consistency, that these different writers excelled each in their way. I might remark here that the epithet *elegant* is very sparingly used in modern criticism. It has probably gone out of fashion with the appearance of the *Lake School*, who, I apprehend, have no such phrase in their vocabulary. Mr. Rogers was, I think, almost the last poet to whom it was applied as a characteristic compliment. At present it would be considered as a sort of diminutive of the title of poet, like the terms *pretty* or *fanciful*, and is banished from the *haut ton* of letters. It may perhaps come into request at some future period. Again, the dispute between the admirers of Homer and Virgil has never been settled, and never will: for there will always be minds to whom the excellences of Virgil will be more congenial, and therefore more objects of admiration than those of Homer, and *vice versâ*. Both are right in preferring what suits them best, the delicacy and selectness of the one, or the fulness and majestic flow of the other. There is the same difference in their tastes that there was in the genius of their two favorites. Neither can the disagreement between the French and English school of tragedy ever be reconciled, till the French become English, or the English French.* Both are right in what they admire, both are wrong in condemning the others for what they admire. We see the defects of Racine, they see the faults of Shakspeare probably in an exaggerated point of view. But we may be sure of this, that when we see nothing but grossness and barbarism, or insipidity and verbiage in a writer that is the God of a nation's idolatry, it

* Of the two the latter alternative is more likely to happen. We abuse and imitate them. They laugh at but do not imitate us.

is we and not they who want true taste and feeling. The controversy about Pope and the opposite school in our own poetry comes to much the same thing. Pope's correctness, smoothness, &c., are very good things and much to be commended in him. But it is not to be expected or even desired that others should have these qualities in the same paramount degree, to the exclusion of everything else. If you like correctness and smoothness of all things in the world, there they are for you in Pope. If you like other things better, such as strength and sublimity, you know where to go for them. Why trouble Pope or any other author for what they have not, and do not profess to give? Those who seem to imply that Pope possessed, besides his own peculiar, exquisite merits, all that is to be found in Shakspeare or Milton, are I should hardly think in good earnest. But I do not therefore see that, because this was not the case, Pope was no poet. We cannot by a little verbal sophistry confound the qualities of different minds, nor force opposite excellences into a union by all the intolerance in the world. We may pull Pope in pieces as long as we please, for not being Shakspeare or Milton, as we may carp at them for not being Pope: but this will not make a poet equal to all three. If we have a taste for some one precise style or manner, we may keep it to ourselves and let others have theirs. If we are more catholic in our notions, and want variety of excellence and beauty, it is spread abroad for us to profusion in the variety of books and in the several growth of men's minds, fettered by no capricious or arbitrary rules. Those who would prescribe whatever falls short of a given standard of imaginary perfection, or who reject from a higher capacity of taste or range of intellect than others, "bound about the world to creep, to crib and cabin in," all enjoyments and objects but their own,

We find people of a decided and original, and others of a more general and versatile taste. I have sometimes thought that the most original minds, made and complete. They see everything in a point of view, in a particular medium. What they see not in their own light and manner, they do not see at all. Others, "each taste to eye." The extreme [illegible] impres-

sions compared with the feebleness of those they receive at second hand from others, oversets the balance and just proportion of their minds. Men who have fewer native resources, and are obliged to apply oftener to the general stock, acquire by habit a greater aptitude in appreciating what they owe to others. Their taste is not made a sacrifice to their egotism and vanity, and they enrich the soil of their minds with continual accessions of borrowed strength and beauty. I might take this opportunity of observing, that the person of the most refined and least contracted taste I ever knew was the late Joseph Fawcett, the friend of my youth. He was almost the first literary acquaintance I ever made, and I think the most candid and unsophisticated. He had a masterly perception of all style and of every kind and degree of excellence, sublime or beautiful, from Milton's Paradise Lost to Shenstone's Pastoral Ballad, from Butler's Analogy down to Humphry Clinker. If you had a favorite author, he had read him too, and knew all the best morsels, the subtle *traits*, the capital touches. "Do you like Sterne?"—"Yes, to be sure," he would say, "I should deserve to be hanged, if I didn't!" His repeating some parts of Comus with his fine, deep, mellow-toned voice, particularly the lines, "I have heard my mother Circe with the Sirens three," &c.—and the enthusiastic comments he made afterwards, were a feast to the ear and to the soul. He read the poetry of Milton with the same fervor and spirit of devotion that I have since heard others read their own. "That is the most delicious feeling of all," I have heard him exclaim, "to like what is excellent, no matter whose it is." In this respect he practised what he preached. He was incapable of harboring a sinister motive, and judged only from what he felt. There was no flaw nor mist in the clear mirror of his mind. He was as open to impressions as he was strenuous in maintaining them. He did not care a rush whether a writer was old or new, in prose or in verse—"What he wanted," he said, "was something to make him think." Most men's minds are to me like musical instruments out of tune. Touch a particular key, and it jars and makes harsh discord with your own. They like Gil Blas, but can see nothing to laugh at in Don Quixote: they adore Richardson, but are disgusted with Fielding. Fawcett had a taste accommodated to all these. He was not

exceptions. He gave a cordial welcome to all sorts, provided they were the best in their kind. He was not hard to counterfeits or duplicates. His sensitivity was as much an asset as his critical acumen, and while his character was naturally generous in the extreme. He was not the sort of man who would have known "contempt" for natural enthusiasm or enough to throw the pitcher and by assuming what they perhaps thought an innocent naivety, detach themselves of their real strength and advantages. A beautiful effect or a noble motive opened wide. He has made me (by contrast) [illegible] of genuine sincerity and generous sentiment in some that I have despised as shams, and convinced me of practical proof were wanting of the truth of that text of Scripture — "That had I all the wit of men and all signs with the tongues of angels, yet without charity I were nothing!" I would rather be a man of [illegible] and [illegible] and have no more than that quality whatever I think, than a man of greater and more critical genius, if I have any, without it. And I am not but my wife — [illegible] compared with the wife we would [illegible] myself [illegible]!

There is another race of critics who might be designated as the [illegible]. They discern no beauties but what are concealed from superficial eyes, and overlook all that are obvious to the vulgar part of mankind. Their art is the transmutation of styles. By happy alchemy of mind they convert [illegible] into [illegible]. They see farther into a millstone than most others. If an author is utterly unreadable, they can read [illegible] as intelligible as [illegible]. They [illegible] Sir Thomas Browne to [illegible], Dr. Johnson to Burke's Vindication of Natural Society, Pope's Homer to the Georgian Verse. They progress [illegible] to the [illegible]. They will no more share [illegible] unless they have it all to themselves. They will no more share [illegible] than [illegible]. If they suspected [illegible] they would [illegible]. They are [illegible] that [illegible] what is

odd and out of the way. They must come at their pleasures with difficulty, and support admiration by an uneasy sense of ridicule and opposition. They despise those qualities in a work which are cheap and obvious. They like a monopoly of taste, and are shocked at the prostitution of intellect implied in popular productions. In like manner, they would choose a friend or recommend a mistress for gross defects; and tolerate the sweetness of an actress's voice only for the ugliness of her face. Pure pleasures are in their judgment cloying and insipid—

"An ounce of sour is worth a pound of sweet!"

Nothing goes down with them but what is *caviare* to the multitude. They are eaters of olives and readers of black-letter. Yet they smack of genius and would be worth any money, were it only for the rarity of the thing!

The last sort I shall mention are *verbal critics*—mere word-catchers, fellows that pick out a word in a sentence and a sentence in a volume, and tell you it is wrong.* These erudite persons constantly find out by anticipation that you are deficient in the smallest things—that you cannot spell certain words or join the nominative case and the verb together, because to do this is the height of their own ambition, and of course they must set you down lower than their opinion of themselves. They degrade by reducing you to their own standard of merit; for the qualifications they deny you, or the faults they object, are so very insignificant, that to prove yourself possessed of the one or free from the other, is to make yourself doubly ridiculous. Littleness is their element, and they give a character of meanness to whatever they touch. They creep, buzz, and fly-blow. It is much easier to crush than to catch these troublesome insects; and when they are in your power, your self-respect spares them. The race is almost extinct:—one or two of them are sometimes seen crawling over the pages of the Quarterly Review!

* The title of *Ultra-Crepidarian critics* has been given to a variety of this species

ESSAY XXVI.

On great and little things.

"These little things are great to little man."

GOLDSMITH

THE great and the little have, no doubt, a real existence in the nature of things; but they both find pretty much the same level in the mind of man. It is a common measure which does not always accommodate itself to the size and importance of the objects it represents. It has a certain interest to spare for certain things and no more, according to its humor and capacity; and neither cares to be stinted in its allowance, nor to muster up an unusual share of sympathy, just as the occasion may require. Perhaps if we could recollect distinctly, we should discover that the two things that have affected us most in the course of our lives have been, one of them the greatest, and the other of the smallest possible consequence. To be that pass as too fine a speculation, we know well enough that very trifling circumstances do give us great and lasting annoyance, and as often prove too much for our philosophy and forbearance, as matters of the highest moment. A lump of soot spoiling a man's dinner, a plate of toast falling in the ashes, the being disappointed of a ribband to a cap or a ticket for a ball, have led to serious and almost tragical consequences. Friends not unfrequently fall out and never meet again for some mistake or misunderstanding, as one took it wrong or the other meant it so. We have seen a thousand serious differences of opinion at a coffee-house or tea-table; and dinners an excellent paper on the subject to prove that if a married couple do not quarrel at dinner in the first instance, it will be the only [illegible] opportunity afterwards. [illegible] and deep-plotting poets are put out of their way by very little

things: nay, discreet, worthy people, without any pretensions but to good-nature and common sense, readily surrender the happiness of their whole lives sooner than give up an opinion to which they have committed themselves, though in all likelihood it was the mere turn of a feather which side they should take in the argument. It is the being baulked or thwarted in anything that constitutes the grievance, the unpardonable affront, not the value of the thing to which we have made up our minds. Is it that we despise little things; that we are not prepared for them; that they take us in our careless, unguarded moments, and tease us out of our ordinary patience by their petty, incessant, insect warfare, buzzing about us and stinging us like gnats; so that we can neither get rid of nor grapple with them, whereas we collect all our fortitude and resolution to meet evils of greater magnitude? Or is it that there is a certain stream of irritability that is continually fretting upon the wheels of life, which finds sufficient food to play with in straws and feathers, while great objects are too much for it, either choke it up, or divert its course into serious and thoughtful interest? Some attempt might be made to explain this in the following manner.

One is always more vexed at losing a game of any sort by a single hole or ace, than if one has never had a chance of winning it. This is no doubt in part or chiefly because the prospect of success irritates the subsequent disappointment. But people have been known to pine and fall sick from holding the next number to the twenty thousand pound prize in the lottery. Now this could only arise from their being so near winning in fancy, from there seeming to be so thin a partition between them and success. When they were within one of the right number, why could they not have taken the next—it was so easy: this haunts their minds and will not let them rest, notwithstanding the absurdity of the reasoning. It is that the will here has a slight imaginary obstacle to surmount to attain its end; it should appear it had only an exceedingly trifling effort to make for this purpose, that it was absolutely in its power (had it known) to seize the envied prize, and it is continually harassing itself by making the obvious transition from one number to the other, when it is too late. That is to say, the will acts in proportion to its fancied

power, to its superiority over immediate obstacles. Now in little or indifferent matters there seems no reason why it should not have its own way, and therefore a disappointment vexes it the more. It grows angry according to the insignificance of the occasion, and frets itself to death about an object, merely because it ends very fairly there can be supposed to be no real difficulty in the way of its attainment, nor anything more required for this purpose than a determination of the will. The being baulked of this throws the mind off its balance, or puts it into what is called *a passion*; and as nothing but an act of voluntary power still seems necessary to get rid of every impediment, we indulge our violence more and more, and heighten our impatience by degrees into a sort of frenzy. The object is the same as it was, but we are not the same as we were. The blood is heated, the muscles are strained. The feelings are wound up to a pitch of agony with the vain strife. The temper is tried to the utmost it will bear. The more contemptible the object or the obstructions in the way to it, the more are we provoked at being hindered by them. It looks like witchcraft. We fancy there is a spell upon us, so that we are hampered by straws and entangled in cobwebs. We believe that there is a fatality about our affairs. It is evidently done on purpose to plague us. A demon is at our elbow to torment and defeat us in everything, even in the smallest things. We see him sitting and mocking us, and we rave and gnash our teeth at him in return. It is particularly hard that we cannot succeed in any one point, however trifling, that we set our hearts on. We are the sport of imbecility and mischance. We make another desperate effort, and fly out into the same extravagance of impotent rage once more. Our anger runs away with our reason, because, as there is little to give it birth, there is nothing to check it or recall us to our senses in the prospect of consequences. We take up and rend in pieces the mere toys of humour, as the gusts of wind take up and whirl about chaff and stubble. Passion plays the tyrant in a grand tragic-comic style over the Lilliputian difficulties and petty disappointments it has to encounter, [illegible] of [illegible] thing [illegible] achiev- [illegible]

able loss, would instantly bring it to its recollection, and tame it in its preposterous career. A man may be in a great passion and give himself strange airs at so simple a thing as a game at ball, for instance; may rage like a wild beast, and be ready to dash his head against the wall about nothing, or about that which he will laugh at the next minute, and think no more of ten minutes after, at the same time that a good smart blow from the ball, the effects of which he might feel as a serious inconvenience for a month, would calm him directly—

> "Anon as patient as the female dove,
> His silence will sit drooping."

The truth is, we pamper little griefs into great ones, and bear great ones as well as we can. We can afford to dally and play tricks with the one, but the others we have enough to do with, without any of the wantonness and bombast of passion—without the swaggering of Pistol, or the insolence of King Cambyses' vein. To great evils we submit, we resent little provocations. I have before now been disappointed of a hundred pound job and lost half a crown at rackets on the same day, and been more mortified at the latter than the former. That which is lasting we share with the future, we defer the consideration of till to-morrow: that which belongs to the moment we drink up in all its bitterness, before the spirit evaporates. We probe minute mischiefs to the quick; we lacerate, tear, and mangle our bosoms with misfortune's finest, brittlest point, and wreak our vengeance on ourselves and it for good and all. Small pains are more manageable, more within our reach; we can fret and worry ourselves about them, can turn them into any shape, can twist and torture them how we please:—a grain of sand in the eye, a thorn in the flesh only irritates the part, and leaves us strength enough to quarrel and get out of all patience with it:—a heavy blow stuns and takes away all power of sense as well as of resistance. The great and mighty reverses of fortune, like the revolutions of nature, may be said to carry their own weight and reason along with them: they seem unavoidable and remediless, and we submit to them without murmuring as to a fatal necessity. The magnitude of the events, in which we may happen to be con-

cerned, fills the mind, and carries it out of itself, as it were, into the page of history. Our thoughts are expanded with the scene on which we have to act, and lend us strength to disregard our own personal sufferings. Some men are indifferent to the stroke of fate, as before and after earthquakes there is a calm in the air. From the commanding situations in which they have been accustomed to view things, they look down at themselves as only a part of the whole, and can abstract their minds from the pressure of misfortune, by the aid of its very violence. They are projected, in the explosion of events, into a different sphere, far from their former thoughts, purposes, and passions. The greatness of the change anticipates the slow effects of time and reflection:—they at once contemplate themselves from an immense distance, and look up with speculative wonder at the height on which they stood. Had the downfall been less complete, it would have been more galling and borne with less resignation, because there might still be a chance of remedying it by farther efforts and farther endurance—but *past cure, past hope*. It is chiefly this cause (together with something of a constitutional character) which has enabled the greatest man in modern history to bear his reverses of fortune with gay magnanimity, and to submit to the loss of the empire of the world with as little discomposure as if he had been playing a game at chess.* This does not prove by our theory [illegible] passions with Talleyrand [illegible] when things went wrong. He [illegible] A man may dislike impertinence, yet have no quarrel with necessity!

The [illegible] they have not the [illegible] which their authors have, [illegible]

* [illegible]

to the leaders, and how much to unforeseen accidents: they are aware either that the result was not to be helped, or that they did all they could to prevent it.

——— "Si Pergama dextra
Defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent."

It is the mist and obscurity through which we view objects that make us fancy they might have been, or might still be otherwise. The precise knowledge of antecedents and consequents makes men practical as well as philosophical Necessarians. It is the want of this knowledge which is the principle and soul of gambling, and of all games of chance or partial skill. The supposition is, that the issue is uncertain, and that there is no positive means of ascertaining it. It is dependent on the turn of a die, on the tossing up of a halfpenny: to be fair, it must be a lottery; there is no knowing but by the event; and it is this which keeps the interest alive, and works up the passion little short of madness. There is all the agitation of suspense, all the alternation of hope and fear, of good and bad success, all the eagerness of desire, without the possibility of reducing this to calculation, that is, of subjecting the increased action of the will to a known rule, or restraining the excesses of passion within the bounds of reason. We see no cause beforehand why the run of the cards should not be in our favor:—we will hear of none afterwards why it should not have been so. As in the absence of all *data* to judge by, we wantonly fill up the blank with the most extravagant expectations, so, when all is over, we obstinately recur to the chance we had previously. There is nothing to tame us down to the event, nothing to reconcile us to our hard luck, for so we think it. We see no reason why we failed (and there was none, any more than why we should succeed)—we think that, reason apart, our will is the next best thing; we still try to have it our own way, and fret, torment, and harrow ourselves up with vain imaginations to effect impossibilities.* We play the game over again: we won-

* Losing gamesters thus become desperate, because the continued and violent irritation of the will against a run of ill-luck drives it to extremity, and makes it bid defiance to common sense and every consideration of prudence or self-interest

and insignificant, as the skittle-player bends his body to give a

the full diapason of applause at the end of the *Prologue*, and hear my ingenious friend in the first row of the pit roar with laughter at his own wit! Then I dwelt with forced complacency on some part in which it had been doing well: then we would consider (in concert) whether the long, tedious opera of the *Travellers*, which preceded it, had not tired people beforehand, so that they had not spirits left for the quaint and sparkling "wit skirmishes" of the dialogue, and we all agreed it might have gone down after a Tragedy, except Lamb himself, who swore he had no hopes of it from the beginning, and that he knew the name of the hero when it came to be discovered could not be got over. Mr. H——, thou wert damned! Bright shone the morning on the play-bills that announced thy appearance, and the streets were filled with the buzz of persons asking one another if they would go to see Mr. H——, and answering that they would certainly: but before night the gaiety, not of the author, but of his friends and the town was eclipsed, for thou wert damned! Hadst thou been anonymous, thou haply mightst have lived. But thou didst come to an untimely end for thy tricks, and for want of a better name to pass them off!

In this manner we go back to the critical minutes on which the turn of our fate, or that of any one else in whom we are interested, depended; try them over again with new knowledge and sharpened sensibility; and thus think to alter what is irrevocable, and ease for a moment the pang of lasting regret. So in a game at rackets* (to compare small things with great) I think if at such a point I had followed up my success, if I had not been too secure or over-anxious in another part, if I had played for such an opening, in short, if I had done anything but what I did and what has proved unfortunate in the result, the chances were all in my favor. But it is merely because I do not know what would have happened in the other case, that I interpret it so readily to my own advantage. I have sometimes lain awake a whole night, trying to serve out the last ball of an interesting game in a particular

* Some of the poets in the beginning of the last century would often set out on a simile by observing—"So in Arabia have I seen a Phœnix!" I confess my illustrations are of a more homely and humble nature

sword, and went away perfectly satisfied.—To return from this, which to some will seem a digression, and to others will serve as a confirmation of the doctrine I am insisting on.

It is not then the value of the object, but the time and pains bestowed upon it, that determines the sense and degree of our loss. Many men set their minds only on trifles, and have not a compass of soul to take an interest in anything truly great and important beyond forms and *minutiæ*. Such persons are really men of little minds, or may be complimented with the title of great children,

"Pleased with a feather, tickled with a straw."

Larger objects elude their grasp, while they fasten eagerly on the light and insignificant. They fidget themselves and others to death with incessant anxiety about nothing. A part of their dress that is awry keeps them in a fever of restlessness and impatience; they sit picking their teeth, or paring their nails, or stirring the fire, or brushing a speck of dirt off their coats, while the house or the world tumbling about their ears would not rouse them from their morbid insensibility. They cannot sit still on their chairs for their lives, though, if there were anything for them to do, they would become immoveable. Their nerves are as irritable as their imaginations are callous and inert. They are addicted to an inveterate habit of littleness and perversity, which rejects every other motive to action or object of contemplation but the daily, teazing, contemptible, familiar, favorite sources of uneasiness and dissatisfaction. When they are of a sanguine instead of a morbid temperament, they become *quidnuncs* and virtuosos —collectors of caterpillars and odd volumes, makers of fishing-rods and curious in watch-chains. Will Wimble dabbled in this way, to his immortal honor. But many others have been less successful. There are those who build their fame on epigrams or epitaphs, and others who devote their lives to writing the Lord's Prayer in little. Some poets compose and sing their own verses. Which character would they have us think most highly of—the poet or the musician? The Great is One. Some there are who feel more pride in sealing a letter with a head of Homer than ever

that old blind bard did in writing his Iliad. These raise a huge opinion of themselves out of nothing, as there are those who shrink from their own merits into the shade of unconquerable humility. I know one person at least, who would rather be the author of an unsuccessful farce than of a successful tragedy. Repeated mortification has produced an inverted ambition in his mind, and made failure the bitter test of desert. He cannot lift his drooping head to gaze on the gaudy crown of popularity placed within his reach, but casts a pensive, rivetted look downwards to the modest flowers which the multitude trample under their feet. If he had a piece likely to succeed, coming out under all advantages, he would damn it by some ill-timed, wilful jest, and lose the favor of the public, to preserve the sense of his personal identity. "Misfortune," Shakspeare says, "brings a man acquainted with strange bedfellows:" and it makes some [illegible] their own losses.—It is a maxim with many—"*Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves.*" Those only put it in practice successfully who think more of the pence than of the pounds. To such, a large sum is less than a small one. Great speculations, great returns are to them extravagant or imaginary: a few hundreds a year are something *snug* and comfortable. Persons who have been used to a petty, huckstering way of life cannot enlarge their apprehensions to a notion of anything better. Instead of launching out into greater expense and liberality with the tide of fortune, they draw back with the fear of consequences, and think to succeed on a broad scale by dint of meanness and parsimony. My uncle Toby frequently caught Trim standing up behind his chair, when he had bid him be seated. What the corporal did out of respect, others would do out of servility. The menial character does not wear out in three or four generations. You cannot keep some people out of the kitchen, merely because their grandfathers or grandmothers came out of it. A poor man and his wife walked along in the neighbourhood of Portland-place, he said to her peevishly, "What business have we to walk in these streets and squares? Let us turn down [illegible]!" He felt he should be more at home there. L—— said of an acquaintance of his, that when he was young he wanted to be a tailor, but had not spirit! This is

the misery of unequal matches. The woman cannot easily forget, or think that others forget, her origin; and with perhaps superior sense and beauty, keeps painfully in the back-ground. It is worse when she braves this conscious feeling, and displays all the insolence of the upstart and affected fine lady. But shouldst thou ever, my Infelice, grace my home with thy loved presence, as thou hast cheered my hopes with thy smile, thou wilt conquer all hearts with thy prevailing gentleness, and I will show the world what Shakspeare's women were!—Some gallants set their hearts on princesses; others descend in imagination to women of quality; others are mad after opera-singers. For my part, I am shy even of actresses, and should not think of leaving my card with Madame V——. I am for none of these *bonnes fortunes;* but for a list of humble beauties, servant-maids and shepherd-girls, with their red-elbows, hard hands, black stockings, and mob-caps, I could furnish out a gallery equal to Cowley's, and paint them half as well. Oh! might I but attempt a description of some of them in poetic prose, Don Juan would forget his Julia, and Mr. Davison might both print and publish this volume. I agree so far with Horace, and differ with Montaigne. I admire the Clementinas and Clarissas at a distance; the Pamelas and Fannys of Richardson and Fielding make my blood tingle. I have written love-letters to such in my time, *d'un pathetique à faire fendre les rochers*, and with about as much effect as if they had been addressed to stone. The simpletons only laughed, and said, that "those were not the sort of things to gain the affections." I wish I had kept copies in my own justification. What is worse, I have an utter aversion to *blue-stockings*. I do not care a fig for any woman that knows even what *an author* means. If I know that she has read anything I have written, I cut her acquaintance immediately. This sort of literary intercourse with me passes for nothing. Her critical and scientific acquirements are *carrying coals to Newcastle*. I do not want to be told that I have published such or such a work. I knew all this before. It makes no addition to my sense of power. I do not wish the affair to be brought about in that way. I would have her read my soul: she should understand the language of the heart: she should know what I am, as if she were another self! She should

love me for myself alone. I like myself without any reason: I would have her do so too. This is not very reasonable. I abstract from my temptations to admire all the circumstances of dress, birth, breeding, fortune; and I would not willingly put forward my own pretensions, whatever they may be. The image of some fair creature is engraven on my inmost soul; it is on that I build my claim to her regard, and expect her to see into my heart, as I see her form always before me. Wherever she treads, pale primroses, like her face, vernal hyacinths, like her brow, spring up beneath her feet, and music hangs on every bough: but all is cold, barren, and desolate without her. Thus I feel and thus I think. But have I ever told her so? No. Or if I did, would she understand it? No. "I hunt the wind, I worship a statue, cry aloud to the desert." To see beauty is not to be beautiful, to pine in love is not to be loved again.—I always was inclined to raise and magnify the power of Love. I thought that his sweet power should only be exerted to join together the loveliest forms and fondest hearts; that none but those in whom his Godhead shone outwardly, and was inly felt, should ever partake of his triumphs; and I stood and gazed at a distance, as unworthy to mingle in so bright a throng, and did not (even for a moment) wish to tarnish the glory of so fair a vision by being myself admitted into it. I say this was my notion once, but God knows it was one of the errors of my youth. For coming nearer to look, I saw the maimed, the blind, and the halt enter in, the crooked and the dwarf, the ugly, the old and impotent, the man of pleasure and the man of the world, the dapper and the pert, the vain and shallow boaster, the fool and the pedant, the ignorant and brutal, and all that is farthest removed from earth's fairest-born, and the pride of human life. Seeing all these enter the courts of Love, and thinking that I also might venture in under favour of the crowd, but finding myself rejected, I fancied (I might be wrong) that it was not so much because I was below, as above the common standard. I did feel, but I was ashamed to feel, mortified at my repulse, when I saw the [illegible] very [illegible] creature [illegible] I took [illegible] where

my inheritance! The only thing I ever piqued myself upon was the writing the *Essay on the Principles of Human Action*—a work that no woman ever read, or would ever comprehend the meaning of. But if I do not build my claim to regard on the pretensions I have, how can I build it on those I am totally without? Or why do I complain and expect to gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Thought has in me cancelled pleasure; and this dark forehead, bent upon truth, is the rock on which all affection has split. And thus I waste my life in one long sigh; nor ever (till too late) beheld a gentle face turned gently upon mine!..... But no! not too late, if that face, pure, modest, downcast, tender, with angel sweetness, not only gladdens the prospect of the future, but sheds its radiance on the past, smiling in tears. A purple light hovers round my head. The air of love is in the room. As I look at my long-neglected copy of the Death of Clorinda, golden gleams play upon the canvas, as they used when I painted it. The flowers of Hope and Joy springing up in my mind, recal the time when they first bloomed there. The years that are fled knock at the door and enter. I am in the Louvre once more. The sun of Austerlitz has not set. It still shines here—in my heart; and he, the son of glory, is not dead, nor ever shall, to me. I am as when my life began. The rainbow is in the sky again. I see the skirts of the departed years. All that I have thought and felt has not been in vain. I am not utterly worthless, unregarded; nor shall I die and wither of pure scorn. Now could I sit on the tomb of Liberty, and write a Hymn to Love. Oh! if I am deceived, let me be deceived still. Let me live in the Elysium of those soft looks; poison me with kisses, kill me with smiles; but still mock me with thy love! *

Poets choose mistresses who have the fewest charms, that they may make something out of nothing. They succeed best in fiction, and they apply this rule to love. They make a Goddess of any dowdy. As Don Quixote said, in answer to the matter of

* I beg the reader to consider this passage merely as a specimen of the mock-heroic style, and as having nothing to do with any real facts or feelings.

fact remonstrances of Sancho, that Dulcinea del Toboso answered the purpose of signalizing his valor just as well as the richest princess under the sky," so many of the fair sex will serve the turn to write about just as well as another. They take a very awkward thing and dress it up in the most ludicrous guise, as children deck out a wooden doll in fine clothes. Perhaps, a fine head of hair, a taper waist, a handsome countenance strike them, and they leave the rest out as not worth their notice. They have a wonderful knack of supplying deficiencies in the subjects of their fancy out of the stock-house of their imaginations. They pretty much as their favorites do statues, when they figure with Bernini's ecstasied Virgin's or even Canova's Venus. This good effect for the unprepossessing, and unpleasant, I have to ascribe not merely to a desire on poets to take a view of the more attractive talents upon but to their powers of imparting perfections even those of beauty in the eyes of what might otherwise be with the continual incense offered to their personal vanity.

Cardinal Mazarine never thought anything of Cardinal de Retz, after he told him that he had written for the last thirty years of his life with the same pen. Some Italian poet going to present a copy of verses to the Pope, and finding, as he was looking them over in the carriage on the way, a mistake of a single letter in the printing, instead of *lauri* (laurels) *lauri* (laurels) in the heart of a verse, immediately changed it. A similar remark was made on the very disappointing success in the history of a certain work of fiction, which I cannot refrain from giving to you. The author of "Anthony Grimes Lectures, a most learned and entertaining Discourse on the Art of Medicine, 1446, was a strolling mountebank, who used to practise his tricks upon the boors in the streets of Cologne, and to sell his nostrums to the rabble. This learned man wrote his book in an apartment in the palace. His room was very large, but he was forced to use a candle in the day time; and one day, going about without putting it out, he happened to set fire to the papers which he had prepared for the press, and were burnt. The distress he was in upon this occasion was sufficient to make him forget his learning. He ran to the master of the house, and told him what had happened. "Oh!" said the other, "what misery could have befallen me! would to God you had been choked with the smoke of your candle!"

with inexpiable hatred against me!' Then turning himself to an image of the Virgin Mary near at hand, 'Virgin (says he) hear what I have to say, for I speak in earnest, and with a composed spirit: if I shall happen to address you in my dying moments, I humbly intreat you not to hear me, nor receive me into Heaven, for I am determined to spend all eternity in Hell!' Those who heard these blasphemous expressions, endeavored to comfort him; but all to no purpose; for, the society of mankind being no longer supportable to him, he left the city, and retired, like a savage, to the deep solitude of a wood. Some say that he was murdered there by ruffians: others, that he died at Bologna in 1500, after much contrition and penitence."

Perhaps the censure passed at the outset of the anecdote on this unfortunate person is unfounded and severe, when it is said that he brought his miseries on himself "by having set his affections unreasonably on trifles." To others it might appear so: but to himself the labor of a whole life was hardly a trifle. His passion was not a causeless one, though carried to such frantic excess The story of Sir Isaac Newton presents a strong contrast to the last-mentioned one, who on going into his study and finding that his dog Tray had thrown down a candle on the table, and burnt some papers of great value, contented himself with exclaiming, "Ah! Tray, you don't know the mischief you have done!" Many persons would not forgive the overturning a cup of chocolate so soon.

I remember hearing an instance some years ago of a man of character and property, who through unexpected losses had been condemned to a long and heart-breaking imprisonment, which he bore with exemplary fortitude. At the end of four years, by the interest and exertions of friends, he obtained his discharge with every prospect of beginning the world afresh, and had made his arrangements for leaving his irksome abode, and meeting his wife and family at a distance of two hundred miles by a certain day. Owing to the miscarriage of a letter, some signature necessary to the completion of the business did not arrive in time, and on account of the informality which had thus arisen, he could not set out home till the return of the post, which was four days longer. His spirit could not brook the delay. He had wound himself up

to the last pitch of expectation; he had, as it were, calculated his patience to hold out to a certain point, and then to throw down his load for ever, and he could not find resolution to resume it for a few hours beyond this. He put an end to the intolerable conflict of hope and disappointment in a fit of excruciating anguish. Woes that we have time to foresee and leisure to contemplate, break their force by being spread over a larger surface, and borne at intervals; but those that come upon us suddenly, for however short a time, seem to insult us by their unnecessary and uncalled-for intrusion; and the very prospect of relief, when held out and then withdrawn from us, to however small a distance, only frets impatience into agony by tantalising our hopes and wishes; and to rend asunder the thin partition that separates us from our favorite object, we are ready to burst even the fetters of life itself!

I am not aware that any one has demonstrated how it is that a stronger capacity is required for the conduct of great affairs than of small ones. The organs of the mind, like the pupil of the eye, may be contracted or dilated to view a broader or a narrower surface, and yet find sufficient variety to occupy its attention in each. The material universe is infinitely divisible, and so is the texture of human affairs. We take things in the gross or in the detail, according to the occasion. I think I could as soon get up the budget of Ways and Means for the current year, as be sure of making both ends meet, and paying my rent at quarter-day in a paltry huckster's shop. Great objects move on by their own weight and impulse; great power turns aside petty obstacles; and he, who wields it, is often but the puppet of circumstances, like monarch on the wheel that said, "What a dust we raise!" It is easier to rule a kingdom and aggrandize one's own pride and prejudices than to set up a green-grocer's stall. Any idiot or a madman may do this at any time, whose word is law, and whose nod is fate. Nay, he whose power is accidental, and who only states the secret wishes of the great, may easily trample on the necks and tread out the liberties of a country not his own, overturning their strength, and making it the mere tool of a consciousness of his own meanness. Power is not wisdom, it is true; but it may encompass its own objects. It does not exact, but spares, vigilance.

When a man creates this power, or new-moulds the state by sage counsels and bold enterprises, it is a different thing from overturning it with the levers that are put into his baby hands. In general, however, it may be argued that great transactions and complicated concerns ask more genius to conduct them than smaller ones, for this reason, *viz.* that the mind must be able either to embrace a greater variety of details in a more extensive range of objects, or must have a greater faculty of generalising, or a greater depth of insight into ruling principles, and so come at true results in that way. Bonaparte knew everything, even to the names of our cadets in the East-India service; but he failed in this, that he did not calculate the resistance which barbarism makes to refinement. He thought that the Russians could not burn Moscow, because the Parisians could not burn Paris. The French think everything must be French. The Cossacks, alas! do not conform to etiquette: the rudeness of the seasons knows no rules of politeness!—Some artists think it a test of genius to paint a large picture, and I grant the truth of this position, if the large picture contains more than a small one. It is not the size of the canvas, but the quantity of truth and nature put into it, that settles the point. It is a mistake, common enough on this subject, to suppose that a miniature is more finished than an oil-picture. The miniature is inferior to the oil-picture only because it is less finished, because it cannot follow nature into so many individual and exact particulars. The proof of which is, that the copy of a good portrait will always make a highly finished miniature (see for example Mr. Bone's enamels), whereas the copy of a good miniature, if enlarged to the size of life, will make but a very sorry portrait. Several of our best artists, who are fond of painting large figures, invert this reasoning. They make the whole figure gigantic, not that they may have room for nature, but for the motion of their brush (as if they were painting the side of a house), regarding the extent of canvas they have to cover as an excuse for their slovenly and hasty manner of getting over it; and thus, in fact, leave their pictures nothing at last but overgrown miniatures, but huge caricatures. It is not necessary in any case (either in a larger or a smaller compass) to go into the details, so as to lose sight of the effect, and decompound the face

into porous and transparent molecules, in the manner of Denner, who painted what he saw through a magnifying glass. The paint in his eye need not be a microscope, but I contend that it should be a looking-glass, bright, clear, lucid. The *little* in art begins with insignificant parts, with what does not tell in connection with other parts. The true artist will paint not material points, but *moral quantities*. In a word, wherever there is feeling or expression in a muscle or a vein, there is grandeur and refinement too. I will conclude these remarks with an account of the manner in which the ancient sculptors combined great and little things in such matters. "That the name of Phidias," says Pliny, "is illustrious among all the nations that have heard of the fame of the Olympian Jupiter, no one doubts: but in order that those may know that he is deservedly praised who have not even seen his works, we shall offer a few arguments, and these of his genius only: nor to this purpose shall we insist on the beauty of the Olympian Jupiter, nor on the magnitude of the Minerva at Athens, though it is twenty-six cubits in height (about thirty-five feet), and is made of ivory and gold: but we shall refer to the shield, on which the battle of the Amazons is carved on the outer side: on the inside of the same is the fight of the Gods and Giants: and on the sandals, that between the Centaurs and Lapithæ: so well did every part of that work display the powers of the Art. Again, the sculpture on the pedestal he called the birth of Pandora: there were there seen in number thirty Gods, the figure of Victory being particularly admirable: the learned also admire the figures of the serpent and the brazen sphinx, writhing under the spear. These things are mentioned in passing of an artist never enough to be commended, that it may be seen that he showed the same magnificence even in small things."—*Pliny's Natural History*, Book 36.

ESSAY XXVII.

On Familiar Style.

It is not easy to write a familiar style. Many people mistake a familiar for a vulgar style, and suppose that to write without affectation is to write at random. On the contrary, there is nothing that requires more precision, and, if I may so say, purity of expression, than the style I am speaking of. It utterly rejects not only all unmeaning pomp, but all low, cant phrases, and loose, unconnected, *slipshod* allusions. It is not to take the first word that offers, but the best word in common use; it is not to throw words together in any combination we please, but to follow and avail ourselves of the true idiom of the language. To write a genuine familiar or truly English style, is to write as any one would speak in common conversation, who had a thorough command and choice of words, or who could discourse with ease, force, and perspicuity, setting aside all pedantic and oratorical flourishes. Or to give another illustration, to write naturally is the same thing in regard to common conversation, as to read naturally is in regard to common speech. It does not follow that it is an easy thing to give the true accent and inflection to the words you utter, because you do not attempt to rise above the level of ordinary life and colloquial speaking. You do not assume indeed the solemnity of the pulpit, or the tone of stage-declamation: neither are you at liberty to gabble on at a venture, without emphasis or discretion, or to resort to vulgar dialect or clownish pronunciation. You must steer a middle course. You are tied down to a given and appropriate articulation, which is determined by the habitual associations between sense and sound, and which you can only hit by entering into the author's meaning, as you must find the proper words and style to express yourself by fixing your thoughts on the subject you have to write about. Any one may mouth out a passage with a theatrical cadence, or get upon stilts to tell his thoughts: but to write or speak with

propriety and simplicity is a more difficult task. Thus it is easy to affect a pompous style, to use a word twice as big as the thing you want to express: it is not so easy to pitch upon the very word that exactly fits it. Out of eight or ten words equally common, equally intelligible, with nearly equal pretensions, it is a matter of some nicety and discrimination to pick out the very one, the preferableness of which is scarcely perceptible, but decisive. The reason why I object to Dr. Johnson's style is, that there is no discrimination, no selection, no variety in it. He uses none but "tall, opaque words," taken from the "first row of the rubric:"—words with the greatest number of syllables, or Latin phrases with merely English terminations. If a fine style depended on this sort of arbitrary pretension, it would be fair to judge of an author's elegance by the measurement of his words, and the substitution of foreign circumlocutions (with no precise associations) for the mother-tongue. How simple is it to be dignified without ease, to be pompous without meaning! Surely, it is but a mechanical rule for avoiding what is low to be always pedantic and affected. It is clear you cannot use a vulgar English word, if you never use a common English word at all. A fine tact is shown in adhering to those which are perfectly common, and yet never falling into any expressions which are debased by disgusting circumstances, or which owe their signification and point to technical or professional allusions. A truly natural or familiar style can never be quaint or vulgar, for this reason, that it is of universal force and applicability, and that quaintness and vulgarity arise out of the immediate connection of certain words with coarse and disagreeable, or with confined ideas. The last form what we understand by *cant* or *slang* phrases.—To give an example of what is not very clear in the general statement. I should say that the phrase *To cut with a knife*, or *To cut a piece of wood*, is perfectly free from vulgarity, because it is perfectly common: but *to cut an acquaintance* is not quite unexceptionable, because it is not perfectly common or intelligible, and has hardly yet

[illegible]

yet escaped out of the limits of slang phraseology. I should hardly therefore use the word in this sense without putting it in italics as a license of expression, to be received *cum grano salis*. All provincial or bye-phrases come under the same mark of reprobation—all such as the writer transfers to the page from his fire-side or a particular *coterie*, or that he invents for his own sole use or convenience. I conceive that words are like money, not the worse for being common, but that it is the stamp of custom alone that gives them circulation or value. I am fastidious in this respect, and would almost as soon coin the currency of the realm as counterfeit the King's English. I never invented or gave a new and unauthorized meaning to any word but one single one (the term *impersonal* applied to feelings), and that was in an abstruse metaphysical discussion to express a very difficult distinction. I have been (I know) loudly accused of revelling in vulgarisms and broken English. I cannot speak to that point: but so far I plead guilty to the determined use of acknowledged idioms and common elliptical expressions. I am not sure that the critics in question know the one from the other, that is, can distinguish any medium between formal pedantry and the most barbarous solecism. As an author, I endeavor to employ plain words and popular modes of construction, as were I a chapman and dealer, I should common weights and measures.

The proper force of words lies not in the words themselves, but in their application. A word may be a fine-sounding word, of an unusual length, and very imposing from its learning and novelty, and yet in the connection in which it is introduced, may be quite pointless and irrelevant. It is not pomp or pretension, but the adaptation of the expression to the idea that clenches a writer's meaning:—as it is not the size or glossiness of the materials, but their being fitted each to its place, that gives strength to the arch; or as the pegs and nails are as necessary to the support of the building as the larger timbers, and more so than the mere showy, unsubstantial ornaments. I hate anything that occupies more space than it is worth. I hate to see a load of band-boxes go along the street, and I hate to see a parcel of big words without anything in them. A person who does not deliberately dispose of all his thoughts alike in cumbrous draperies and flimsy dis-

prevailing costume, they would probably seem more startling and out of the way. The old English authors, Burton, Fuller, Coryate, Sir Thomas Brown, are a kind of mediators between us and the more eccentric and whimsical modern, reconciling us to his peculiarities. I do not however know how far this is the case or not, till he condescends to write like one of us. I must confess that what I like best of his papers under the signature of Elia (still I do not presume, amidst such excellence, to decide what is most excellent) is the account of *Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist*, which is also the most free from obsolete allusions and turns of expression—

"A well of native English undefiled."

To those acquainted with his admired prototypes, these Essays of the ingenious and highly gifted author have the same sort of charm and relish that Erasmus's Colloquies or a fine piece of modern Latin have to the classical scholar. Certainly, I do not know any borrowed pencil that has more power or felicity of execution than the one of which I have here been speaking.

It is as easy to write a gaudy style without ideas, as it is to spread a palette of showy colors, or to smear in a flaunting transparency. "What do you read?"—"Words, words, words."—"What is the matter?"—"*Nothing*," it might be answered. The florid style is the reverse of the familiar. The last is employed as an unvarnished medium to convey ideas; the first is resorted to as a spangled veil to conceal the want of them. When there is nothing to be set down but words, it costs little to have them fine. Look through the dictionary, and cull out a *florilegium*, rival the *tulipomania*. *Rouge* high enough, and never mind the natural complexion. The vulgar, who are not in the secret, will admire the look of preternatural health and vigor; and the fashionable, who regard only appearances, will be delighted with the imposition. Keep to your sounding generalities, your tinkling phrases, and all will be well. Swell out an unmeaning truism to a perfect tympany of style. A thought, a distinction is the rock on which all this brittle cargo of verbiage splits at once. Such writers have merely *verbal* imaginations, that retain nothing but words. Or their puny thoughts have

dragon-wings, all green and gold. They soar far above the vulgar failing of the *Sermo humi obrepens*—their most ordinary speech is never short of an hyperbole, splendid, imposing, vague, incomprehensible, magniloquent, a cento of sounding common-places. If some of us, whose "ambition is more lowly," pry a little too narrowly into nooks and corners to pick up a number of "unconsidered trifles," they never once direct their eyes or lift their hands to seize on any but the most gorgeous, tarnished, threadbare patch-work set of phrases, the left-off finery of poetic extravagance, transmitted down through successive generations of barren pretenders. If they criticise actors and actresses, a huddled phantasmagoria of feathers, spangles, floods of light, and oceans of sound float before their morbid sense, which they paint in the style of Ancient Pistol. Not a glimpse can you get of the merits or defects of the performers: they are hidden in a profusion of barbarous epithets and wilful rhodomontade. Our hypercritics are not thinking of these little fantoccini beings—

"That strut and fret their hour upon the stage"—

but of tall phantoms of words, abstractions, *genera* and *species*, sweeping clauses, periods that unite the Poles, forced alliterations, astounding antitheses—

"And on their pens *Fustian* sits plumed."

If they describe kings and queens, it is an Eastern pageant. The Coronation at either House is nothing to it. We get at four repeated images—a curtain, a throne, a sceptre, and a foot-stool. These are with them the wardrobe of a lofty imagination; and they turn their servile strains to servile uses. Do we read a description of pictures? It is not a reflection of tones and hues which "nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on," but piles of precious stones, rubies, pearls, emeralds, Golconda's mines, and all the blazonry of art. Such persons are in fact besotted with words, and their brains are turned with the glittering, but empty and sterile phantoms of things. Personifications, capital letters, seas of sunbeams, visions of glory, shining inscriptions, the figures of a transparency, Britannia with her shield, or Hope leaning on an

anchor, make up their stock in trade. They may be considered as *hieroglyphical* writers. Images stand out in their minds isolated and important merely in themselves, without any ground-work of feeling—there is no context in their imaginations. Words affect them in the same way, by the mere sound, that is, by their possible, not by their actual application to the subject in hand. They are fascinated by first appearances, and have no sense of consequences. Nothing more is meant by them than meets the ear: they understand or feel nothing more than meets their eye. The web and texture of the universe, and of the heart of man, is a mystery to them; they have no faculty that strikes a chord in unison with it. They cannot get beyond the daubings of fancy, the varnish of sentiment. Objects are not linked to feelings, words to things, but images revolve in splendid mockery, words represent themselves in their strange rhapsodies. The categories of such a mind are pride and ignorance. Pride in outside show, to which they sacrifice everything, and ignorance of the true worth and hidden structure both of words and things. With a sovereign contempt for what is familiar and natural, they are the slaves of vulgar affectation—of a routine of high-flown phrases. Scorning to imitate realities, they are unable to invent anything, to strike out one original idea. They are not copyists of nature, it is true: but they are the poorest of all plagiarists, the plagiarists of words. All is far-fetched, dear-bought, artificial, oriental in subject and allusion: all is mechanical, conventional, vapid, formal, pedantic in style and execution. They startle and confound the understanding of the reader, by the remoteness and obscurity of their illustrations: they soothe the ear by the monotony of the same everlasting round of circuitous metaphors. They are the *mock-school* in poetry and prose. They flounder about between fustian in expression, and bathos in sentiment. They tantalize the fancy, but never reach the head nor touch the heart. Their Temple of Fame is like a shadowy structure raised by Dulness to Vanity, or like Cowper's description of the Empress of Russia's palace of ice, "as worthless as in show 'twas glittering"—

"It smiled, and it was cold!"

ESSAY XXVIII.

On Effeminacy of Character.

EFFEMINACY of character arises from a prevalence of the sensibility over the will; or it consists in a want of fortitude to bear pain or to undergo fatigue, however urgent the occasion. We meet with instances of people who cannot lift up a table fork to their mouths—from whom we cannot receive the smallest compliment—who are totally helpless. They cannot put themselves out of their way on any account. Nothing makes a more ridiculous appearance in the days of romance, than a knight's going on a pilgrimage to the mansions they have constructed; but the true cause they fail is not that they cannot walk. They have always pretended, and the creatures of the present system will always pretend, that they are unable to walk. They go by conveyances to the ends of the world; they will not move the smallest step, and in they look for any object that can be got at by walking. You cannot see [illegible] without the help of a coach. [illegible] They have [illegible] of their own [illegible] that they shall be [illegible] a prevailing wish [illegible] They have [illegible] Hence a [illegible] Late for them

and they have no fancy for fishing in troubled waters. The ordinary state of existence they regard as something importunate and vain, and out of nature. What must they think of its trials and sharp vicissitudes? Instead of voluntarily embracing pain, or labor, or danger, or death, every sensation must be wound up to the highest pitch of voluptuous refinement, every motion must be grace and elegance; they live in a luxurious, endless dream, or

"Die of a rose in aromatic pain!"

Siren sounds must float around them; smiling forms must everywhere meet their sight; they must tread a soft measure on painted carpets or smooth-shaven lawns; books, arts, jests, laughter, occupy every thought and hour—what have they to do with the drudgery, the struggles, the poverty, the disease or anguish, which are the common lot of humanity! These things are intolerable to them, even in imagination. They disturb the enchantment in which they are lapt. They cause a wrinkle in the clear and polished surface of their existence. They exclaim with impatience and in agony, "Oh, leave me to my repose!" How "they shall discourse the freezing hours away, when wind and rain beat dark December down," or "bide the pelting of the pitiless storm," gives them no concern, it never once enters their heads. They close the shutters, draw the curtains, and enjoy or shut out the whistling of the approaching tempest. "They take no thought for the morrow," not they. They do not anticipate evils. Let them come when they will come, they will not run to meet them. Nay more, they will not move one step to prevent them, nor let any one else. The mention of such things is shocking; the very supposition is a nuisance that must not be tolerated. The idea of the trouble, the precautions, the negotiations necessary to obviate disagreeable consequences oppresses them to death, is an exertion too great for their enervated imaginations. They are not like Master Barnardine in Measure for Measure, who would not "get up to be hanged"—they would not get up to avoid being hanged. They are completely wrapped up in themselves; but then all their self-love is concentrated in the present minute. They have worked up their effeminate and fastidious appetite of enjoyment to such a pitch, that the whole of their

existence, every moment of it, must be made up of these exquisite infinitesimals; or they will fling it all away, with indifference and scorn. They stake their entire welfare on the gratification of the passion of the instant. Their selfishness, their vanity, their thoughtlessness, have been pampered till they recoil at the smallest suspension of their perpetual dose of excitement, and they will purchase the illusive happiness of the next five minutes, by a mortgage on the ambiguous ease and comfort of years. They must have their will in everything, or they grow sullen and peevish like spoiled children. Whatever they set their eyes on, or make up their minds to, they must have that instant. They may pay for it hereafter. But that is no matter. They snatch a joy by and the reached rose, and consider the present moment sacred, inviolable, unapproachable to that fiend, cheerless, haggard, inexorable taskmaster, the future. *Now or never* is their motto. They are ruining themselves by the gratification of the moment. What is to happen to them a week hence is as if it were to happen to them a thousand years hence. They put off the consideration of it until to-day, and their heedless unconcern laughs at it as a fable. Their life is "a cell of ignorance, travelling a-bed;" their existence is ephemeral; their thoughts are insect-winged, and their whole existence with the whim, the folly, the passion of the hour.

Nothing but a miracle can rouse such people from their lethargy. It cannot be expected, nor is it even possible in the natural course of things. Pope's striking exclamation,

> "Oh sacred weight! O pleasure unknown!
> That only virtue gives, sure and alone!"

hardly applies here; namely, to evils that stare us in the face, and that might be averted with the least prudence or resolution. But nothing ever is done. How should it? A sickly exhausted constitution will not take the necessary steps to ward off disease, however certain and inevitable. Their whole attention is taken up with the present moment; and to that they sacrifice every thing. They are not to be roused to a sense of their situation, because they are not capable of it. Their very welfare is anything but a matter of indifference to them. The very

motives that imperiously urge them to self-reflection and amendment, combine with their natural disposition to prevent it. This amounts pretty nearly to a mathematical demonstration. Ease, vanity, pleasure, are the ruling passions in such cases. How will you conquer these, or wean their infatuated votaries from them? By the dread of hardship, disgrace, pain? They turn from them and you who point them out as the alternative, with sickly disgust; and instead of a stronger effort of courage or self-denial to avert the crisis, hasten it by a wilful determination to pamper the disease in every way, and arm themselves, not with fortitude to bear or to repel the consequences, but with judicial blindness to their approach. Will you rouse the indolent procrastinator to an irksome but necessary effort, by showing him how much he has to do? He will only draw back the more for all your entreaties and representations. If of a sanguine turn, he will make a slight attempt at a new plan of life, be satisfied with the first appearance of reform, and relapse into indolence again. If timid and undecided, the hopelessness of the undertaking will put him out of heart with it, and he will stand still in despair. Will you save a vain man from ruin, by pointing out the obloquy and ridicule that await him in his present career? He smiles at your forebodings as fantastical; or the more they are realized around him, the more he is impelled to keep out the galling conviction, and the more fondly he clings to flattery and death. He will not make a bold and resolute attempt to recover his reputation, because that would imply that it was capable of being soiled or injured; or he no sooner meditates some desultory project, than he takes credit to himself for the execution, and is delighted to wear his unearned laurels while the thing is barely talked of. The chance of success relieves the uneasiness of his apprehensions; so that he makes use of the interval only to flatter his favorite infirmity again. Would you wean a man from sensual excesses by the inevitable consequences to which they lead?—What holds more antipathy to pleasure than pain? The mind given up to self-indulgence, revolts at suffering: and throws it from it as an unaccountable anomaly, as a piece of injustice when it comes. Much less will it acknowledge any affinity with or subjection to it as a mere threat. If the prediction does not imme-

diately come true, we laugh at the prophet of ill; if it is verified, we hail our adviser prospectively as a [illegible] and [illegible] of them dare trust the [illegible] of [illegible]. We resent with some contempt as an [illegible], and consider those very warnings of impending misfortune, as if they had brought it on our heads. We cry out with the poetical enthusiast—

> "Ye Powers, to us such diff'rent lots you give;
> And why this diff'rence, while we live?
> Why is it that the same [illegible] sweet,
> Drives [illegible] and [illegible] to [illegible]?"

But oh thou! who didst lend me speech when I was dumb, to whom I owe it that I have not crept thro' my belief all the days of my life like a coward, but sometimes [illegible] forbid crest or tread the crystreats wake-proud [illegible] my nightly slumbers! Shake off the heavy honey-dew of thy soul, no longer lulled with that Circean cup, drinking thy own thoughts with thy own ears, but start up in thy promised likeness, and shake the pillared rectitude of the world! Leave not thy sounding words in air, write them in marble, and teach the coming age heroic truths! Up, and wake the echoes of Time! Rich in deepest lore, disdain the [illegible] clear of knowledge, leaving the survivors nibblest! Set, set us [illegible] in pomp and gladness! Dare like the sunflower and [illegible] to flash at light; and ere thou ascend to thy native sky, show us the steps by which thou didst scale the Heaven of Epic Poesy, with Truth and Fancy for thy equal wings, that we may catch thy mantle, rabbi-wise, and sell it by words dear to Memory, dear to Fame!

People in general are ignorant of this character, which is the writing of a fancy character. Such persons are always creating difficulties, and unable to [illegible] to remove them. They cannot [illegible] a cobweb, and are stupefied by an insect's wing. Their courage is [illegible], rather than [illegible]. The weight of reason and resolution in the [illegible] [illegible] from the [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible]; and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] that is, an [illegible] [illegible] of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] power. There is a specific [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] that

you cannot propel them to any object, or give them a decided *momentum* in any direction or pursuit. They turn back, as it were, on the occasion that should project them forward with manly force and vehemence. They shrink from intrepidity of purpose, and are alarmed at the idea of attaining their end too soon. They will not act with steadiness or spirit, either for themselves or you. If you chalk out a line of conduct for them, or commission them to execute a certain task, they are sure to conjure up some insignificant objection or fanciful impediment in the way, and are withheld from striking an effectual blow by mere feebleness of character. They may be officious, good-natured, friendly, generous in disposition, but they are of no use to any one. They will put themselves to twice the trouble you desire, not to carry your point, but to defeat it; and in obviating needless objections neglect the main business. If they do what you want, it is neither at the time nor in the manner that you wish. This timidity amounts to treachery; for by always anticipating some misfortune or disgrace, they realize their unmeaning apprehensions. The little bears sway in their minds over the great: a small inconvenience outweighs a solid and indispensable advantage; and their strongest bias is uniformly derived from the weakest motive. They hesitate about the best way of beginning a thing till the opportunity for action is lost, and are less anxious about its being done than the precise manner of doing it. They will destroy a passage sooner than let an objectionable word pass; and are much less concerned about the truth or the beauty of an image, than about the reception it will meet with from the critics. They alter what they write, not because it is, but because it may possibly be wrong; and in their tremulous solicitude to avoid imaginary blunders, run into real ones. What is curious enough is, that with all this caution and delicacy, they are continually liable to extraordinary oversights. They are in fact so full of all sorts of idle apprehensions, that they do not know how to distinguish real from imaginary grounds of apprehension; and they often give some unaccountable offence either from assuming a sudden boldness half in sport, or while they are secretly pluming themselves on their dexterity in avoiding everything exceptionable; and the same distraction of motive and short-sightedness

which gets them into scrapes, hinders them from seeing their way out of them. Such persons seldom are consistently at cross-purposes with themselves and others; with neither do things nor do others go with them; and whether they succeed or fail, never feel confident or at their ease. They spoil the freshness and originality of their own thoughts by a sickly contrariety and vice versâ; and in bothering others, while they are *about it and about it*, you might have done the thing you tried and tried to do times over.

There is nothing more to be esteemed than a manly firmness and consistency of character. I like a person who knows his own mind and sticks to it; who sees at once what is to be done in given circumstances and does it. He does not beat about the bush for difficulties or excuses, but goes the shortest and most effectual way to work to attain his wishes, or to accomplish a business. If he can serve you, he will do so; if he can't, he will say so without keeping you in needless suspense, or laying you under protestations. The applying to him in any laudable undertaking is not like stirring "a dish of skimmed milk." There is stuff in him, and it is of the right practicable sort. He is not a mere hawk and buzzard who tear or slay, but a Wolf or a Tiger, a friend or foe, a knave or a fool; but thanks to [illegible], and to the gods he is not one to play fantastic tricks [illegible] with good people or trifle with any man's time. [illegible] he does not need a dancing-master to [illegible] you [illegible] you will [illegible] or anticipate [illegible] to things to succeed by accomplishing [illegible]. He [illegible] serve you, and not to play the game [illegible] of [illegible].

[illegible]

[illegible] to what [illegible] in certain cases.

There are those of whom it has been said, that to them an obligation is a reason for not doing anything, and there are others who are invariably led to do the reverse of what they should. The last are perverse, the first impracticable people. Opposed to the effeminate in disposition and manners are the coarse and brutal. As those were all softness and smoothness, these affect or are naturally attracted to whatever is vulgar and violent, harsh and repulsive in tone, in modes of speech, in forms of address, in gesture and behavior. Thus there are some who ape the lisping of the fine lady, the drawling of the fine gentleman, and others who all their lives delight in and catch the uncouth dialect, the manners and expressions of clowns and hoydens. The last are governed by an instinct of the disagreeable, by an appetite and headlong rage for violating decorum, and hurting other people's feelings, their own being excited and enlivened by the shock. They deal in home truths, unpleasant reflections, and unwelcome matters of fact; as the others are all compliment and complaisance, insincerity and insipidity.

We may observe an effeminacy of style, in some degree corresponding to effeminacy of character. Writers of this stamp are great interliners of what they indite, alterers of indifferent phrases, and the plague of printers' devils. By an effeminate style I would be understood to mean one that is all florid, all fine; that cloys by its sweetness, and tires by its sameness. Such are what Dryden calls "calm, peaceable writers." They only aim to please, and never offend by truth or disturb by singularity. Every thought must be beautiful *per se*, every expression equally fine. They do not delight in vulgarisms, but in common-places, and dress out unmeaning forms in all the colors of the rainbow. They do not go out of their way to think—that would startle the indolence of the reader: they cannot express a trite thought in common words—that would be a sacrifice of their own vanity. They are not sparing of tinsel, for it costs nothing. Their works should be printed, as they generally are, on hot-pressed paper, with vignette margins. The Della Cruscan school comes under this description, but is now nearly exploded. Lord Byron is a pampered and aristocratic writer, but he is not effeminate, or we should not have his works with only the printer's name to them

I cannot help thinking that the fault of Mr. Keats's poems was a deficiency in masculine energy of style. He had beauty, tenderness, delicacy, in an uncommon degree, but there was a want of strength and substance. His Endymion is a very delightful description of the illusions of a youthful imagination, given up to airy dreams—we have flowers, clouds, rainbows, moonlight, all sweet sounds and smells, and Oreads and Dryads flitting by—but there is nothing tangible in it, nothing marked or palpable—we have none of the hardy spirit or rigid forms of antiquity. He paints his own thoughts and character; and did not transport himself into the fabulous and heroic ages. There is a want of action, of character, and so far, of imagination, but there is exquisite fancy. All is soft and fleshy, without bone or muscle. We see a mind "in its growth, without the manhood of poetry. His poetry is "natural as vernal light and joy."—"Like Maia's son he stood and shook his plumes," with fragrance filled. His mind was redolent of spring. He had not the fierceness of summer, nor the richness of autumn, and winter he seemed not to have known, till he felt the icy hand of death!

ESSAY XXIX.

Whether Actors ought to sit in the Boxes?

I THINK not, and for the following reasons, as well as I can give them:—

Actors belong to the public: their persons are not their own property. They exhibit themselves on the stage: that is enough, without displaying themselves in the boxes of the theatre. I conceive that an actor, on account of the very circumstances of his profession, ought to keep himself as much *incognito* as possible. He plays a number of parts disguised, transformed into them as much as he can "by his so potent art," and he should not disturb this borrowed impression by unmasking before company, more than he can help. Let him go into the pit, if he pleases, to see —not into the first circle, to be seen. He is seen enough without that: he is the centre of an illusion that he is bound to support, both, as it appears to me, by a certain self-respect which should repel idle curiosity, and by a certain deference to the public, in whom he has inspired certain prejudices which he is covenanted not to break. He represents the majesty of successive kings; he takes the responsibility of heroes and lovers on himself; the mantle of genius and nature falls on his shoulders; we "pile millions" of associations on him, under which he should be "buried quick," and not perk out an inauspicious face upon us, with a plain-cut coat, to say—"What fools you all were!—I am not Hamlet the Dane!"

It is very well and in strict propriety for Mr. Matthews, in his AT HOME, after he has been imitating his inimitable Scotchwoman, to slip out as quick as lightning, and appear in the side-box shaking hands with our old friend Jack Bannister. It adds to our surprise at the versatility of his changes of place and appearance, and he had been before us in his own person during a great part

of the evening. There was no harm done—no imaginary spell broken—no obscurity of thought or sentiment. Mr. Macready is himself (without offence be it spoken) both a cleverer and a more respectable man than many of the characters he represents. Not so when

> "O'er the stage the Ghost Hamlet stalks,
> Or illumines, Desdemona-like, its walks,
> And Queen Mammas question their sons in Latin."

A different feeling then prevails:—close, close the scene upon them, and never break that fine phantasmagoria of the brain. Or if it must be heard at all, let us choose some other time and place for it:—let some wantonly flash the Circean cup from our lips over the spirit of enchantment in the very palace of enchantment. O. P. M. ——, and such knowledge! What a thing it is, for instance, for any part of an actor's dress to come off unexpectedly while he is playing! What a *cut* it is upon human dignity and theatrical grace! What an effort it has to recover head's-off and struggle through this exposure of the naked truth! It has been considered a mark of the triumphs of Garrick's tragic power, that once, when he was playing Lear, his crown of straw came off, and nobody appeared to laugh: the least motion, so much had he absorbed little-souled into character. Was he after this to pay such little respect to the feelings he had inspired, as to tear off his tattered rotes, and have the folly cannot keep with him to play the fool in the house?

> "Nay, but hearing you—Nay, but this is silliness—
> Nay, but hearing you—Nay, but this is silliness—
> Some other time, sweet sir!"

Sophia Lee's novel of *Clara* falls in love with Garrick from being present when he plays the part of Romeo—on which he says, "I have worn Romeo to a thread—I can be of no more use to the character"—and so turns on Neal Downes. Sophia Lee's novel is an attempt to expand a theatrical anecdote into a story, *in prose*, and, consequently, contains many passages which are the pure creation of the author. Mr. Alexander Dyce's account of Garrick, in his *Recollections*, was published in

Had Julius Cæsar such a nose? or wore his frill as you do? You have slain I don't know how many heroes 'with a bare bodkin,' the gold pin in your shirt, and spoiled all the fine love speeches you will ever make by picking your teeth with that inimitable air!"

An actor, after having performed his part well, instead of courting farther distinction, should affect obscurity, and "steal most guilty-like away," conscious of admiration that he can support nowhere but in his proper sphere, and jealous of his own and others' good opinion of him, in proportion as he is a darling in the public eye. He cannot avoid attracting disproportionate attention: why should he wish to fix it on himself in a perfectly flat and insignificant part, viz. his own character? It was a bad custom to bring authors on the stage to crown them. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico est.* Even professed critics, I think, should be shy of putting themselves forward to applaud loudly: any one in a crowd has "a voice potential" as the press: it is either committing their pretensions a little indiscreetly, or confirming their own judgment by a clapping of hands. If you only go and give the cue lustily, the house seems in wonderful accord with your opinions. An actor, like a king, should only appear on state occasions. He loses popularity by too much publicity; or, according to the proverb, *familiarity breeds contempt.* Both characters personate a certain abstract idea, are seen in a fictitious costume, and when they have "shuffled off this more than mortal coil," they had better keep out of the way—the acts and sentiments emanating from themselves will not carry on the illusion of our prepossessions. Ordinary transactions do not give scope to grace and dignity like romantic situations, or prepared pageants, and the *little* is apt to prevail over the *great*, if we come to count the instances.

The motto of a great actor should be *aut Cæsar aut nihil.* I do not see how with his crown, or plume of feathers, he can get through those little box-doors without stooping and squeezing his artificial importance to tatters. The entrance of the stage is arched so high "that *players* may jet through, and keep their gorgeous turbans on, without good-morrow to the gods!"

The top-tragedian of the day has too large and splendid a train following him to have room for them in one of the dress-boxes

When he appears there, it should be only to express [illegible] the moment he quits the stage, in full costume, as Cato and Brutus, and Cassius, and of him with the falchion and [illegible] Lear, and [illegible] Richard, and Hamlet. Prince of Denmark, and numberless more, and demand entrance [illegible] which will [illegible] his stage.

"Thy grass, yawn and [illegible] epithet [illegible] questions [illegible] stones." "There is a mighty fuss [illegible] or, a [illegible] and [illegible] to [illegible]. An actor's retinue is important, [illegible] the management [illegible] much, and he should therefore [illegible] the pit. Authors, who are in a manner his makers and [illegible], should [illegible] ? "How does it [illegible]?" That then is the very reason he should [illegible] the stage [illegible]. A [illegible] should [illegible] to [illegible] perspective. If I had seen the late Gentleman Lewis [illegible] in a [illegible] situation in the boxes, I should have been puzzled whether to [illegible] as the Copper Captain, or as Beau Ideal, or Ranger, or young Rapid, or Lord Foppington, or fifty other whimsical characters: then I should have got Munden and Quick, and a parcel more of them in my head, till my brain would have been like a smoke-jack." I should not have known what to make of it; but if I had seen him in the pit, I should have [illegible] him, with respectful curiosity, and have said [illegible] that was Gentleman Lewis. We should have [illegible] circumstance that he was a modest, sensible man; we should [illegible] that he did not show off whenever he [illegible].

There is one class of gentlemen that I think is quite exempt [illegible] I mean *retired tradesmen*. Once within the walls, they will [illegible] they are welcome [illegible] it out. They have [illegible] in their native town as children [illegible]. But they [illegible] somehow, connection. Is [illegible] with the [illegible]

> [illegible]
> Now [illegible]

Mrs. G[illegible] appearance [illegible] of her husband [illegible] in the [illegible] pit. Had Mrs. Pinchback or

Mrs. Clive been living, I am afraid we should have seen little of them—it would have been too *home* a feeling with them. Mrs. Siddons seldom if ever goes, and yet she is almost the only thing left worth seeing there. She need not stay away on account of any theory that I can form. She is out of the pale of all theories, and annihilates all rules. Wherever she sits there is grace and grandeur, there is tragedy personified. Her seat is the undivided throne of the Tragic Muse. She had no need of the robes, the sweeping train, the ornaments of the stage; in herself she is as great as any being she ever represented in the ripeness and plenitude of her power! I should not, I confess, have had the same paramount abstracted feeling at seeing John Kemble there, whom I venerate at a distance, and should not have known whether he was playing off the great man or the great actor;—

"A little more than kin, and less than kind."

I know it may be said in answer to all this pretext of keeping the character of the player inviolate—"What is there more common, in fact, than for the hero of a tragedy to speak the prologue, or than for the heroine, who has been stabbed or poisoned, to revive, and come forward laughing in the epilogue?" As to the epilogue, it is spoken to get rid of the idea of the tragedy altogether, and to ward off the fury of the pit, who may be bent on its damnation. The greatest incongruity you can hit upon is, therefore, the most proper for this purpose. But I deny that the hero of a tragedy, or the principal character in it, is ever pitched upon to deliver the prologue. It is always, by prescription, some walking-shadow, some poor player, who cannot even spoil a part of any consequence. Is there not Mr. C——— always at hand for this purpose, whom the late king pronounced three times to be "a bad actor?"* What is there in common between that accustomed

* Mr. Munden and Mr. C——— went one Sunday to Windsor, to see the King. They passed with other spectators once or twice: at last, his late majesty distinguished Munden in the crowd, and called him to him. After treating him with much cordial familiarity, the king said, "And, pray, who is that with you?" Munden, with many congées, and contortions of face, replied, "An please your majesty, it's Mr. C———, of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane." "Oh! yes," said the king, "I know him well—a bad actor

wave of the hand, and the cocked hat under the arm, and any passion or person that can be brought forward to the stage? Is it not that we can be said to acquire a prejudice against a harmless actor as Mr. C———, we are born with a prejudice against a speaker of prologues. It is an innate object, a natural instinct: there is a particular organ in the brain provided for it. Do we not all hate a manager? Is it not because he is insolent or interested, or fond of masking rational business, or a mercenary puffer, or ignorant, or mean, or vain, but it is because we see him in a coat, waistcoat, and breeches. The stage is the world of fantasy: it is Queen Mab that has invited us to her revels there, and all that have to do with it should wear motley!

Lastly, there are some actors by profession, whose faces we [illegible] in the boxes or anywhere else; but it is because they are [illegible] not actors, [illegible] and sit in their proper places in the boxes, or wherever they are. Does not an actor himself, I would ask, feel conscious and awkward in the boxes, if [illegible] there? [illegible] in the gallery, and [illegible] with a sneaky feeling, and [illegible] as persons?' It is hardly to the stage that he comes to see the play, to show. He must have enough of plays and flimsy. But he wants to see a favourite performer in a new character, or a striking part. Then the place for him to do this is the pit. Painters, I know, always [illegible] to sit in the pit, they want to [illegible] and [illegible] the boxes and [illegible] at. [illegible] in the boxes [illegible] in the pit, [illegible] in the boxes. If you sit in the [illegible] you [illegible] of the company and their [illegible]. If you get [illegible] (as I [illegible] the rest of the [illegible] can [illegible] that is to [illegible]. For [illegible] I [illegible] a seat [illegible] Monmouth [illegible] appearance [illegible] the second or third tier of boxes [illegible] I

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

went, but the other day, with a box-ticket, to see Miss Fanny Brunton come out in Juliet, and Mr. Macready make a first appearance in Romeo; and though I was told (by a tolerable judge) that the new Juliet was the most elegant figure on the stage, and that Mr. Macready's Romeo was quite beautiful, I vow to God I knew nothing of it. So little could I tell of the matter, that at one time I mistook Mr. Horrebow for Mr. Abbott. I have seen Mr. Kean play Sir Giles Overreach one night from the front of the pit, and a few nights after from the front boxes, facing the stage. It was another thing altogether. That which had been so lately nothing but flesh and blood, a living fibre, "instinct with fire" and spirit, was no better than a little fantoccini figure, darting backwards and forwards on the stage, starting, screaming, and playing a number of fantastic tricks before the audience. I could account, in the latter instance, for the little approbation of the performance manifested around me, and also for the general scepticism with respect to Mr. Kean's acting, which has been said to prevail among those who cannot condescend to go into the pit, and have not interest in the orchestra—to see him act. They may then stay away altogether. His face is the running comment on his acting, which reconciles the audience to it. Without that index to his mind, you are not prepared for the vehemence and suddenness of his gestures; his pauses are long, abrupt, and unaccountable, if not filled up by the expression; it is in the working of his face that you see the writhing and coiling up of the passions before they make their serpent-spring; the lightning of his eye precedes the hoarse burst of thunder from his voice.

One may go into the boxes, indeed, and criticise acting and actors with Sterne's stop-watch, but no otherwise—"'And between the nominative case and the verb (which, as your lordship knows, should agree together in number, person, &c.) there was a full pause of a second and two thirds.' 'But was the eye silent—did the look say nothing?'—'I looked only at the stop-watch, my lord.'—'Excellent critic!'"—If any other actor, indeed, goes to see Mr. Kean act, with a view *to avoid imitation*, this may be the place, or rather it is the way to run into it, for you see only his extravagances and defects, which are the most

easily carried away. Mr. Mathews may translate them into an At Home, even from the *stage*!—Distinguished actors, then, ought, I conceive, to set the example of going into the pit, were it only for their own sakes. I remember a trifling circumstance, which I worked up at the time into a confirmation of this theory of mine, engrafted on old prejudice and tradition.* I had got into the middle of the pit, at considerable risk of broken bones, to see Mr. Kean in one of his early parts, when I perceived two young men seated a little behind me, with a certain space left round them. They were dressed in the height of the fashion, in light drab-coloured great coats, and with their shirt-sleeves drawn down over their hands, at a time when this was not so common as it has since become. I took them for younger sons of some old family at least. One of them that was very good-looking, I thought might be Lord Byron, and his companion might be Mr. Hobhouse. They seemed to have wandered from another sphere to this our pit, to witness a master's performance to the utmost advantage. This stamped the thing. They were, undoubtedly, young men of rank and fashion; but their taste was greater than their regard for appearances. The pit was, after all, the true resort of thorough-bred critics and amateurs. When there was anything worth seeing, this was the place; and I began to feel a sort of reflected importance in the consciousness that I also was a critic. No one sat near them—it would have seemed like an intrusion. Not a syllable was uttered.—They were two clerks in the Victualling Office!

What I would insist on, then, is this—that for Mr. Kean, or Mr. Young, or Mr. Macready, or any of those that are "cried [illegible]

* [illegible]

be admitted (under special favor) to an actor's dressing-room. Let me not see how Cato painted, or how Cæsar combed! Let me not meet the prompt-boys in the passage, nor see the half-lighted candles stuck against the bare walls, nor hear the creaking of machines, or the fiddlers laughing; nor see a Columbine practising a pirouette in sober sadness, nor Mr. Grimaldi's face drop from mirth to sudden melancholy as he passes the side-scene, as if a shadow crossed it, nor witness the long-chinned generation of the pantomime sit twirling their thumbs, nor overlook the fellow who holds the candle for the moon in the scene between Lorenzo and Jessica! Spare me this insight into secrets I am not bound to know. The stage is not a mistress that we are sworn to undress. Why should we look behind the glass of fashion? Why should we prick the bubble that reflects the world, and turn it to a little soap and water? Trust a little to first appearances—leave something to fancy. I observe that the great puppets of the real stage, who themselves play a grand part, like to get into the boxes over the stage; where they see nothing from the proper point of view, but peep and pry into what is going on like a magpie looking into a marrow-bone. This is just like them. So they look down upon human life, of which they are ignorant. They see the exits and entrances of the players, something that they suspect is meant to be kept from them (for they think they are always liable to be imposed upon): the petty pageant of an hour ends with each scene long before the catastrophe, and the tragedy of life is turned to farce under their eyes. These people laugh loud at a pantomime, and are delighted with clowns and pantaloons. They pay no attention to anything else. The stage-boxes exist in contempt of the stage and common sense. The private boxes, on the contrary, should be reserved as the receptacle for the officers of state and great diplomatic characters, who wish to avoid, rather than court popular notice!

ESSAY XXX.

On the Disadvantages of Intellectual Superiority.

The chief disadvantage of knowing more and seeing farther than others, is not to be generally understood. A man is, in consequence of this, liable to start paradoxes, which immediately transport him beyond the reach of the common-place reader. A person speaking once in a slighting manner of a very original-minded man, received for answer—"He strides on so far before you, that he is invisible in the distance!"

Peregrine complains, that "Nature had made him different from other people"—*singulis de cætera gente*. The great happiness of life is, to be neither better nor worse than the general run of those you meet with. If you are beneath them, you are trampled upon; if you are above them, you soon find a mortifying level in their indifference to what you particularly pique yourself upon. What is the use of being moral in a night-cellar, or wise in Bedlam? "To be honest, as this world goes, is to be one man picked out of ten thousand." So says Shakspeare; and the commentators have not added that, under these circumstances, a man is more likely to become the butt of slander than the mark of admiration for being so. "How now, thou particular fellow?"* is the common answer to all such out-of-the-way pretensions. By not doing as those at Rome do, we cut ourselves off from good fellowship and society. We speak another language, have no airs of our own, and are treated as of a different species. Nothing can be more awkward than to intrude with any one's favourite ideas among those of a coarser kind, who will be sure to

> "Start at all strangers, hoot them from their stools,
> And shake their empty noddles in their fools;
> Till the tired owner, fairly out of breath,
> Sneaks to his garret, and there hugs his wrath."

* Jack Cade's [illegible] by saying he [illegible] ESSAY V. [illegible]

Ignorance of another's meaning is a sufficient cause of fear, and fear produces hatred: hence the suspicion and rancor entertained against all those who set up for greater refinement and wisdom than their neighbors. It is in vain to think of softening down this spirit of hostility by simplicity of manners, or by condescending to persons of low estate. The more you condescend, the more they will presume upon it; they will fear you less, but hate you more; and will be the more determined to take their revenge on you for a superiority as to which they are entirely in the dark, and of which you yourself seem to entertain considerable doubts All the humility in the world will only pass for weakness and folly. They have no notion of such a thing. They always put their best foot forward; and argue that you would do the same if you had any such wonderful talents as people say. You had better, therefore, play off the great man at once—hector, swagger, talk big, and ride the high horse over them: you may by this means extort outward respect or common civility; but you will get nothing (with low people) by forbearance and good-nature but open insult or silent contempt. C—— always talks to people about what they don't understand: I, for one, endeavor to talk to them about what they do understand, and find I only get the more ill-will by it. They conceive I do not think them capable of anything better; that I do not think it worth while, as the vulgar saying is, to *throw a word to a dog*. I once complained of this to C——, thinking it hard I should be sent to Coventry for not making a prodigious display. He said, "As you assume a certain character, you ought to produce your credentials. It is a tax upon people's good-nature to admit superiority of any kind, even where there is the most evident proof of it: but it is too hard a task for the imagination to admit it without any apparent ground at all."

There is not a greater error than to suppose that you avoid the envy, malice, and uncharitableness, so common in the world, by going among people without pretensions. There are no people who have no pretensions; or the fewer their pretensions, the less they can afford to acknowledge yours without some sort of value received. The more information individuals possess, or the more they have refined upon any subject, the more readily can they

conceive and admit the same kind of superiority to themselves that they feel over others. But from the low, dull, level sense of ignorance and vulgarity, no idea or look of excellence can arise. You think you are doing mighty well with them; that you are laying aside the buckram of pedantry, and pretension, and getting the character of a plain, unassuming, good sort of fellow. It will not do. All the while that you are making these familiar advances, and wanting to be at your ease, they are trying to get the wind of you. You may forget that you are an author, an artist, or what not—they do not forget that they are nothing, nor bate one jot of their desire to prove you in the same predicament. They take hold of some circumstance in your dress; your manner of entering a room is different from that of other people; you do not eat vegetables—that's odd; you have a particular phrase, which they repeat, and this becomes a sort of standing joke; you look grave, or ill; you talk, or are more silent than usual; you are in or out of pocket: all these petty, inevitable circumstances, in which you resemble or are unlike other people, form so many counts in the indictment which is going on in their imaginations against you, and are so many contradictions in your character. In any one else they would pass unnoticed, but in a person of whom they had heard so much, they cannot make them out at all. Meanwhile, those things in which you really excel, go for nothing, because they cannot judge of them. They speak a jargon of their own, which you do not understand, therefore you make no answer. You recommend them to go and see some picture in which they do not find much to admire. How are you to convince them that you are right? Can you make them perceive that the fault is in their eyes, and not in the picture, unless you could give them your knowledge? "What is the difference between a Claude and a common [illegible] [illegible]

Intellectual is not like bodily strength. You have no hold of the understanding of others but by their sympathy. Your knowing, in fact, so much more about a subject does not give you a superiority, that is, a power over them, but only renders it the more impossible for you to make the least impression on them. Is it then an advantage to you? It may be, as it relates to your own private satisfaction, but it places a greater gulf between you and society. It throws stumbling-blocks in your way at every turn. All that you take most pride and pleasure in is lost upon the vulgar eye. What they are pleased with is a matter of indifference or of distaste to you. In seeing a number of persons turn over a portfolio of prints from different masters, what a trial it is to the patience, how it jars the nerves to hear them fall into raptures at some common-place flimsy thing, and pass over some divine expression of countenance without notice, or with a remark that it is very singular-looking? How useless it is in such cases to fret or argue, or remonstrate? Is it not quite as well to be without all this hypercritical, fastidious knowledge, and to be pleased or displeased as it happens, or struck with the first fault or beauty that is pointed out by others? I would be glad almost to change my acquaintance with pictures, with books, and, certainly, what I know of mankind, for anybody's ignorance of them!

It is recorded in the life of some worthy (whose name I forget) that he was one of those "who loved hospitality and respect:" and I profess to belong to the same classification of mankind. Civility is with me a jewel. I like a little comfortable cheer, and careless, indolent, chat. I hate to be always wise, or aiming at wisdom. I have enough to do with literary cabals, questions, critics, actors, essay-writing, without taking them out with me for recreation, and into all companies. I wish at these times to pass for a good-humored fellow; and good-will is all I ask in return to make good company. I do not desire to be always posing myself or others with the questions of fate, free-will, fore-knowledge absolute, &c. I must unbend sometimes. I must occasionally lie fallow. The kind of conversation that I affect most is what sort of a day it is, and whether it is likely to rain or hold up fine for to-morrow. This I consider as enjoying the *otium cum digni-*

tate, as the end and privilege of a life of study. I would resign myself to this state of easy and luxurious, but I find I cannot. I must maintain a certain position which is far other, I fear, than my wish. I must be quite sure of my existence. I must take up the gauntlet continually, or I find I lose ground. "I am nothing, if not critical." While I am thinking what to look at next, or how I came to blunder in quoting a well-known passage, as if I had done it on purpose, others are thinking whether I am not really as dull as I look, as I am sometimes said to be. It is drizzling slower particles against the windows, it puts me in mind of a mild spring rain, from which I retired twenty years ago, into a little public house near Worcester, Shropshire, and while I saw the points and shades to be the deep and the dewy moisture, quaffed a glass of sparkling ale, and was well housed in the close of evening. Brighter and more sunshiny sights are these! Would I indulge this revenge? In vain. They ask me what news there is, and stare at me when I say I don't know. If a new actress has come out, why must I have seen her? If a new novel has appeared, why must I have read it? I, at one time, used to go and take a hand at cribbage with a friend, and afterwards discuss a cold sirloin of beef, and throw out a few lack-a-daisical remarks, in a way to please himself, and it would not do long. I set up for a critic forsooth, and my reputation was such as it was. As I said nothing, or what was not to the point, it was ominously thrown in my teeth that I was a dull fellow. I was now having to talk disadvantageously to the world in general, and was expected to be quite a lively companion, and was disappointed if I would not do so. I was not better than a fool, and he must be a fool indeed who could not play the game better than I did. If I had nothing to say, I could say that. I could throw out a general remark, and this was my weak point. If I complained of being tired, it was a sad pity I made my visit. If I smoothed my face into a look that passed for pleasure, the answer was, there was a difference between me and the new paper. If I attempted to be what I was not, I was a hypocrite indeed. If I remained myself, I was a fool. If I said anything, I was expected to say whether it was new or old, or whether it was true. I was not to make remarks to myself. I could not be always on the qui vive for pay, and

because they could not tell exactly what an author meant. If a paragraph appeared against anything I had written, I found it was ready there before me, and I was to undergo a regular *roasting*. I submitted to all this till I was tired, and then I gave it up.

One of the miseries of intellectual pretensions is, that nine-tenths of those you come in contact with do not know whether you are an impostor or not. I dread that certain anonymous criticisms should get into the hands of servants where I go, or that my hatter or shoemaker should happen to read them, who cannot possibly tell whether they are well or ill-founded. The ignorance of the world leaves one at the mercy of its malice. There are people whose good opinion or good will you want, setting aside all literary pretensions; and it is hard to lose by an ill report (which you have no means of rectifying) what you cannot gain by a good one. After a *diatribe* in the —— (which is taken in by a gentleman who occupies my old apartments on the first floor) my landlord brings me up his bill (of some standing), and on my offering to give him so much in money, and a note of hand for the rest, shakes his head, and says, he is afraid he could make no use of it. Soon after, the daughter comes in, and, on my mentioning the circumstance carelessly to her, replies gravely, "that indeed her father has been almost ruined by bills." *This is the unkindest cut of all.* It is in vain for me to endeavor to explain that the publication in which I am abused is a mere government engine—an organ of a political faction. They know nothing about that. They only know such and such imputations are thrown out; and the more I try to remove them, the more they think there is some truth in them. Perhaps the people of the house are strong Tories—government agents of some sort. Is it for me to enlighten their ignorance? If I say, I once wrote a thing called Prince Maurice's Parrot, and an Essay on the Regal Character, in the former of which allusion is made to a noble marquis, and in the latter to a great personage (so at least, I am told, it has been construed), and that Mr. Croker has peremptory instructions to retaliate; they cannot conceive what connexion there can be between me and such distinguished characters. I can get no farther. Such is the misery of preten-

plate. There is no getting the start of some people. Do what you will, they can do it better; meet with what success you may, their own good opinion stands them in better stead, and runs before the applause of the world. I once showed a person of this over-weening turn (with no small triumph I confess) a letter of a very flattering description I had received from the celebrated Count Stendhal, dated Rome. He returned it with a smile of indifference, and said, he had a letter from Rome himself the day before, from his friend S——! I did not think this "germane to the matter." G—dw—n pretends I never wrote anything worth a farthing but my answers to Vetus, and that I fail altogether when I attempt to write an essay, or anything in a short compass.

What can one do in such cases? Shall I confess a weakness? The only set-off I know to these rebuffs and mortifications, is sometimes in an accidental notice or involuntary mark of distinction from a stranger. I feel the force of Horace's *digito monstrari*—I like to be pointed out in the street, or to hear people ask in Mr. Powell's court, *which is Mr. H——?* This is to me a pleasing extension of one's personal identity. Your name so repeated leaves an echo like music on the ear: it stirs the blood like the sound of a trumpet. It shows that other people are curious to see you: that they think of you, and feel an interest in you without your knowing it. This is a bolster to lean upon; a lining to your poor, shivering, threadbare opinion of yourself. You want some such cordial to exhausted spirits, and relief to the dreariness of abstract speculation. You are something; and, from occupying a place in the thoughts of others, think less contemptuously of yourself. You are the better able to run the gauntlet of prejudice and vulgar abuse. It is pleasant in this way to have your opinion quoted against yourself, and your own sayings repeated to you as good things. I was once talking with an intelligent man in the pit, and criticising Mr. Knight's performance of Filch. "Ah!" he said, "little Simmons was the fellow to play that character." He added, "There was a most excellent remark made upon his acting it in the EXAMINER (I think it was)—*That he looked as if he had the gallows in one eye and a pretty girl in the other.*" I said nothing, but was in

remarkably good humor the rest of the evening. I have seldom been in a company where lives playing has been talked of, but some one has asked, in the course of it, "Pray did any one ever see an account of one Cavanagh, that appeared some time back in most of the papers? Is it known who wrote it?" These are trying moments. I had a triumph over a person, whose name I will not mention, on the following occasion. I happened to be saying something about Burke, and was expressing my opinion of his talents in no measured terms, when this gentleman interrupted me by saying, he thought, for his part, that Burke had been greatly overrated, and then added, in a careless way, "Pray did you read a character of him in the last number of the ——?" "I wrote it!"—I could not resist the antithesis, but was afterwards ashamed of my momentary petulance. Yet it comes, that I find, ever spares me.

Some persons seek out and ebrandie themselves on public characters, in order, as it might seem, to pick out their failings, and afterwards betray them. Appearances are for it, but truth and a better knowledge of nature are against this interpretation of the matter. Sycophants and flatterers are undesignedly treacherous and fickle. They are prone to admire inordinately at first, and not finding a constant supply of food for this kind of sickly appetite, take a distaste to the object of their idolatry. To be even with themselves for their credulity, they sharpen their wits to spy out faults, and are delighted to find that this answers better than their first employment. It is a course of study, "lively, artificial, and full of event." They have the organ of wonder and the organ of fear in a prominent degree. The first supplies new objects of admiration to satisfy its uneasy craving; the second names them or puts to power wherever its shifting standard appears, and willing to curry favor with all parties, and ready to betray any out of sheer weakness and servility. I don't think they mean any harm. At least, I can look at this theology with indifference on my own part more easily. I have been more disposed to cry out it as I have met with it in experiences, where I have been better able to judge of the extent of the mischief, and the heartlessness and want of duty it discovered.

I do not think great intellectual attainments are any recommendation to the women. They puzzle them, and are a diversion to the main question. If scholars talk to ladies of what they understand, their hearers are none the wiser: if they talk of other things, they only prove themselves fools. The conversation between Angelica and Foresight, in Love for Love, is a receipt in full for all such over-strained nonsense: while he is wandering among the signs of the zodiac, she is standing a tip-toe on the earth. It has been remarked that poets do not choose mistresses very wisely. I believe it is not choice, but necessity. If they could throw the handkerchief like the Grand Turk, I imagine we should see scarce mortals, but rather goddesses, surrounding their steps, and each exclaiming, with Lord Byron's own Ionian maid—

> "So shalt thou find me ever at thy side,
> Here and hereafter, if the last may be!"

Ah! no, these are bespoke, carried off by men of mortal, not ethereal mould, and thenceforth the poet, from whose mind the ideas of love and beauty are inseparable as dreams from sleep, goes on the forlorn hope of the passion, and dresses up the first Dulcinea that will take compassion on him, in all the colors of fancy. What boots it to complain if the delusion lasts for life, and the rainbow still paints its form in the cloud?

There is one mistake I would wish, if possible, to correct. Men of letters, artists, and others, not succeeding with women in a certain rank of life, think the objection is to their want of fortune, and that they shall stand a better chance by descending lower, where only their good qualities or talents will be thought of. Oh! worse and worse. The objection is to themselves, not to their fortune—to their abstraction, to their absence of mind, to their unintelligible and romantic notions. Women of education may have a glimpse of their meaning, may get a clue to their character, but to all others they are thick darkness. If the mistress smiles at their *ideal* advances, the maid will laugh outright: she will throw water over you, get her little sister to listen, send her sweetheart to ask you what you mean, will set the village or the house upon your back; it will be a farce, a comedy,

a standing jest for a year, and then [illegible] off. Scholars should be sworn at Highgate. They are [illegible] chambermaids, or wenches at lodging-houses. They find [illegible] their faults on [illegible]. These [illegible] of themselves [illegible] spelled! They are above morality, so are you [illegible]! But with [illegible] ignorance and cunning, you have nothing in common. Whoever you are, that think you can make a conquest over them by good nature or good sense, be warned by a friendly voice, and retreat in time from the unequal contest.

If, as I have said above, scholars are no match for chambermaids, on the other hand, gentlemen are no match for blackguards. The former are on their honour, act on the square; the latter take all advantages, and have no idea of any other principle. It is astonishing how soon a low fellow will learn to cheat. He is impervious to any ray of liberal knowledge; his understanding is

"Not pierceable by power of any star"—

but it is porous to all sorts of tricks, chicanery, stratagems, and knavery, by which anything is to be got. Mrs. Peachum, indeed, says, that [illegible]

[illegible]

early cultivation of [illegible] and has [illegible] of it at

leisure during the rest of his life. A shrewd man said of my father, that he would not send a son of his to school to him on any account, for that by teaching him to speak the truth, he would disqualify him from getting his living in the world!

It is hardly necessary to add any illustration to prove that the most original and profound teachers are not always the most successful or popular writers. This is not merely a temporary disadvantage; but many great philosophers have not only been scouted while they were living, but forgotten as soon as they were dead. The name of Hobbes is perhaps sufficient to explain this assertion. But I do not wish to go farther into this part of the subject, which is obvious in itself. I have said, I believe, enough to take off the air of paradox which hangs over the title of this Essay.

ESSAY XXXI.

On Patronage and Puffing.

"A gentle Husher, Vanity by name."—Spenser.

A lady was complaining to a friend of mine of the credulity of people in attending to quack advertisements, and wondering who could be taken in by them—"for that she had never bought but one bottle of Dr. ———'s Elixir of Life, and it had done her no sort of good!" This anecdote seemed to explain pretty well [illegible] the doctor's [illegible] advertise his wares in every newspaper in the kingdom. He would no doubt be satisfied if every delicate, sceptical invalid in his majesty's dominions gave his Elixir one trial, merely to show the absurdity of the thing. We affect to laugh at the folly of those who put faith in nostrums, but are willing to see ourselves whether there is any truth in them.

There is a strong tendency in the human mind to flatter itself with secret hopes, with some lucky reservation in our own favor, though reason may point out the grossness of the trick in general; and, besides, there is a wonderful power in words, formed into sentences, and printed in capital letters, to draw the assent after them. [illegible] The ignorant and idle believe what they read, as Scotch philosophers demonstrate the existence of a material world, and other learned [illegible]

we think the candidate for public favor and support has hit upon (perhaps) an injudicious way of laying them before the world. Still there may be something in them; and even the outrageous improbability and extravagance of the statement on the very face of it, stagger us, and leave a hankering to inquire farther into it, because we think the advertiser would hardly have the impudence to hazard such barefaced absurdities without some foundation. Such is the strength of the association between words and things in the mind—so much oftener must our credulity have been justified by the event than imposed upon. If every second story we heard was an invention, we should lose our mechanical disposition to trust to the meaning of sounds, just as when we have met with a number of counterfeit pieces of coin, we suspect good ones; but our implicit assent to what we hear is a proof how much more sincerity and good faith there is in the sum total of our dealings with one another, than artifice and imposture.

"To elevate and surprise" is the great art of quackery and puffing; to raise a lively and exaggerated image in the mind, and take it by surprise before it can recover breath, as it were; so that by having been caught in the trap, it is unwilling to retract entirely—has a secret desire to find itself in the right, and a determination to see whether it is or not. Describe a picture as *lofty*, *imposing*, and *grand*, these words excite certain ideas in the mind like the sound of a trumpet, which are not to be quelled, except by seeing the picture itself, nor even then if it is viewed by the help of a catalogue, written expressly for the occasion by the artist himself. It is not to be supposed that *he* would say such things of his picture, unless they were allowed by all the world; and he repeats them, on this gentle understanding, till all the world allows them.* So reputation runs in a vicious circle, and merit limps behind it, mortified and abashed at its own insignificance. It has been said that the test of fame or popularity is to consider the number of times your name is repeated by others, or is brought to their recollection in the course of a year. At this rate, a man has his reputation in his own hands, and by the help of puffing

* It is calculated that West cleared some hundred pounds by the catalogues that sold of his great picture of Death riding on the pale Horse.

and the press, may forestall the voice of posterity, and stun the "grumbling" ear of his contemporaries. A name let off in your hearing continually, with some tearing epithet affixed to it, startles you like the report of a pistol close at your ear; you cannot help the effect upon the imagination, though you know it is perfectly harmless—*vox et præterea nihil*. So, if you see the same name staring you in the face in great letters at the corner of every street, you involuntarily think the owner of it must be a great man to occupy so large a space in the eye of the town. The appeal is made, in the first instance, to the senses, but it sinks into the mind. There are some, indeed, who puff their own disgrace, and make their names a common by-word and [illegible], notoriety being all that they want. A quack gets himself dubbed Doctor or Knight; and though [illegible] Bayes and his drum typify many a modern adventurer, and court-candidate, for [illegible] and unblushing [illegible]. Of all puffs, lottery-puffs are the most ingenious and most innocent. A collection of them would make an amusing *Ana* [illegible]. They are [illegible] with that [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] which [illegible]

[illegible]

empty houses, the shutters of windows, the blank covers of magazines and reviews, are open to every one. I have heard of a man of literary celebrity sitting in his study writing letters of remonstrance to himself, on the gross defects of a plan of education he had just published, and which remained unsold on the bookseller's counter. Another feigned himself dead in order to see what would be said of him in the newspapers, and to excite a sensation in this way. A flashy pamphlet has been run to a five-and-thirtieth edition, and thus ensured the writer a "deathless date" among political charlatans, by regularly striking off a new title-page to every fifty or a hundred copies that were sold. This is a vile practice. It is an erroneous idea got abroad (and which I will contradict here) that paragraphs are paid for in the leading Journals. It is quite out of the question. A favorable notice of an author, an actress, &c., may be inserted through interest or to oblige a friend, but it must invariably be done for *love*, not *money!*

When I formerly had to do with these sort of critical verdicts, I was generally sent out of the way when any *debutant* had a friend at court, and was to be tenderly handled. For the rest, or those of robust constitutions, I had *carte blanche* given me. Sometimes I ran out of the course, to be sure. Poor Perry! what bitter complaints he used to make, that by *running-a-muck* at lords and Scotchmen I should not leave him a place to dine out at! The expression of his face at these moments, as if he should shortly be without a friend in the world, was truly pitiable. What squabbles we used to have about Kean and Miss Stephens, the only theatrical favorites I ever had! Mrs. Billington had got some notion that Miss Stephens would never make a singer, and it was the torment of Perry's life (as he told me in confidence) that he could not get any two people to be of the same opinion on any one point. I shall not easily forget bringing him my account of her first appearance in the Beggar's Opera. I have reason to remember that article: it was almost the last I ever wrote with any pleasure to myself. I had been down on a visit to my friends near Chertsey, and, on my return, had stopped at an inn at Kingston-upon-Thames, where I had got the Beggar's Opera, and had read it overnight. The next day I

walked cheerfully to town. It was a fine sunny morning, in the end of autumn, and as I repeated the beautiful song, "Love knows no return of spring," I meditated my next day's criticism, trying to do all the justice I could to so inviting a subject. I was not a little proud of it by anticipation. I had just then begun to stammer out my sentiments on paper, and was in a kind of honeymoon of authorship. But soon after, my final hopes of happiness and of human liberty, were blighted nearly at the same time; and since then I have had no pleasure in anything:—

"And Love himself can flutter here no more."

It was not so ten years since (ten short years since).—Ah! how fast those years run that hurry us away from our last fond dream of bliss! when I loitered along thy green retreats, oh! Twickenham, and counted over with curious taste (or right) the chequered vows, which one of thy favourites strewed human life! I deposited my account of the play at the Morning Chronicle Office in the afternoon, and went to see Miss Stephens as Polly. Those were happy times, in which she first came out in this character, in Mansfield, when she sang the dolorous air, "If o'er the cruel tyrant Love" (as I can never be sung again), in Love in a Village, where the scene opened with her and Miss Matthews in a parterre garden of roses and honeysuckles, and "Hope, thou nurse of young Desire," distilled from two sweet voices in turn. Oh! may my ears sometime still drink the same sweet sounds, enhanced with the spectacle of youth and beauty, but on the first terms! I am fastidious, but in a dream of fancy, and I shall hardly meet with its equal! When I got back after the play, Perry called out with his sordid, grating voice, "Well, how did she do?" and I, my speaking in high terms, answered, that "she had been to see Wrangham and the Duke, that some conversation had passed on subjects, he was afraid it was not the thing, it was in the true Grimaldi style: but as I had written the account of Miss Tree's performance in the Beggar's Opera (which is by the way in the next page)." I could perceive that [illegible] and that already in contemplation "the nightly crowds all stretched to see" (as they very often do), and I took care to [illegible] the next day to hear Miss Stephens coming out in the Beggar's

room, who had been to thank him for his very flattering account of her.

I was sent to see Kean the first night of his performance in Shylock, when there were about a hundred people in the pit, but from his masterly and spirited delivery of the first striking speech, "On such a day you called me dog," &c., I perceived it was a hollow thing. So it was given out in the Chronicle, but Perry was continually at me as other people were at him, and was afraid it would not last. It was to no purpose I said *it would last:* yet I am in the right hitherto. It has been said, ridiculously, that Mr. Kean was written up in the Chronicle. I beg leave to state my opinion that no actor can be written up or down by a paper. An author may be puffed into notice, or damned by criticism, because his book may not have been read. An artist may be over-rated, or undeservedly decried, because the public is not much accustomed to see or judge of pictures. But an actor is judged by his peers, the play-going public, and must stand or fall by his own merits or defects. The critic may give the tone or have a casting voice where popular opinion is divided; but he can no more *force* that opinion either way, or wrest it from its base in common-sense and feeling, than he can move Stonehenge. Mr. Kean had, however, physical disadvantages and strong prejudices to encounter, and so far the *liberal* and *independent* part of the press might have been of service in helping him to his seat in the public favor. May he long keep it with dignity and firmness!*

It was pretended by the Covent-garden people, and some others at the time, that Mr. Kean's popularity was a mere effect of love of novelty, a nine days' wonder, like the rage after Master Betty's acting, and would be as soon over. The comparison did not

* I cannot say how in this respect it might have fared if a Mr. M———, a fat gentleman, who might not have "liked you lean and hungry Roscius," had continued in the theatrical department of Mr. Perry's paper at the time of this actor's first appearance; but I had been put upon this duty just before, and afterwards Mr. M———'s *spare* talents were not in much request. This, I believe, is the reason why he takes pains every now and then to inform the readers of the *Courier* that it is impossible for any one to understand a word that I write.

hold. Master Betty's acting was so far wonderful, and drew crowds to see it as a mere singularity, because he was a boy. Mr. Kean was a grown man, and there was no rule or precedent established in the ordinary course of nature why some other man should not appear in tragedy as great as John Kemble. Farther, Master Betty's acting was a singular phenomenon, but it was also as beautiful as it was singular. I saw him in the part of Douglas, and he seemed almost like "some gay creature of the element," moving about gracefully, with all the flexibility of youth, and murmuring Æolian sounds with plaintive tenderness. I shall never forget the way in which he repeated the lines in which Young Norval says, speaking of the fate of two brothers:

"[illegible]"

The [illegible] could convey a deeper pathos to my ear. Perhaps the wonder was made greater than it was. Boys at that age can often read remarkably well, and certainly are not without natural grace and sweetness of voice. The Westminster school-boys are a better company of comedians than we find at most of our theatres. As to the understanding a part like Douglas at least, I see no difficulty on that score. I myself used to recite passages in Home's Speaker with great emphasis and discretion, [illegible] before I was out the nursery age; and the whole [illegible] in the soliloquy in Mrs. Radcliffe's Romance of [illegible] Lamb's [illegible] Douglas. Yet [illegible] experiment has been repeated since, and was unsuccessful [illegible]

[illegible]

It was soon after this that Coleridge returned from Italy, and he got one day into a long *tirade* to explain what a ridiculous farce the whole was, and how all the people abroad were shocked at the *gullibility* of the English nation, who on this and every other occasion were open to the artifices of all sorts of quacks, wondering how any persons with the smallest pretensions to common sense could for a moment suppose that a boy could act the characters of men without any of their knowledge, their experience, or their passions. We made some faint resistance, but in vain. The discourse then took a turn, and Coleridge began a labored eulogy on some promising youth, the son of an English artist, whom he had met in Italy, and who had wandered all over the Campagna with him, whose talents, he assured us, were the admiration of all Rome, and whose early designs had almost all the grace and purity of Raphael's. At last, some one interrupted the endless theme by saying a little impatiently, "Why just now you would not let us believe our own eyes and ears about young Betty, because you have a theory against premature talents, and now you start a boy phenomenon, that nobody knows anything about but yourself—a young artist that, you tell us, is to rival Raphael!" The truth is, we like to have something to admire ourselves, as well as to make other people gape and stare at; but then it must be a discovery of our own, an idol of our own making and setting up:—if others stumble on the discovery before us, or join in crying it up to the skies, we then set to work to prove that this a vulgar delusion, and show our sagacity and freedom from prejudice by pulling it in pieces with all the coolness imaginable. Whether we blow the bubble or crush it in our hands, vanity and the desire of empty distinction are generally at the bottom of our sanguine credulity or fastidious scepticism. There are some who always fall in with the fashionable prejudice as others affect singularity of opinion on all such points, according as they think they have more or less wit to judge for themselves.

If a little varnishing and daubing, a little puffing and quacking, and giving yourself a good name, and getting a friend to speak a word for you, is excusable in any profession, it is, I think, in that

evening, but were prevented. I hope he will consider that the engagement still stands good.

of painting. Painting is an occult science, and requires a little ostentation and mock gravity in the professor. A man may [illegible] royal [illegible] hair on end at his own wonders, [illegible] his head;" for, if he does not, he may [illegible] without it. He [illegible] faces, and attract the [illegible] person any how he can. [illegible] works like [illegible] his profession. [illegible] when he [illegible] [illegible] his stage [illegible] give others something [illegible] Give Mr. Carver and Gillies, [illegible] Mr. Penn- [illegible] Mr. B[illegible] [illegible] Painting is a [illegible] ground, and requires a great many [illegible] and [illegible] Lay [illegible] A man's [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible] in the [illegible] A [illegible] a little [illegible] [illegible] the world, [illegible] [illegible] with fresh [illegible] Fame [illegible] a [illegible] regardless [illegible] as a necessary [illegible] [illegible] corners of the [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] place. "What [illegible] [illegible] "Ay [illegible]" [illegible] "Yes [illegible]" [illegible] "But [illegible]

heard of me?" "I cannot say that I ever did!" It was plain, from this conversation, that Mr. N——— had not kept company enough with picture-dealers and newspaper critics. On another occasion, a country-gentleman, who was sitting to him for his portrait, asked him if he had any pictures in the Exhibition at Somerset-house, and on his replying in the affirmative, desired to know what they were. He mentioned among others, "The Marriage of two Children;" on which the gentleman expressed great surprise, and said that was the very picture his wife was always teasing him to go and have another look at, though he had never noticed the painter's name. When the public are so eager to be amused, and care so little who it is that amuses them, it is not amiss to remind them of it now and then; or even to have a starling taught to repeat the name, to which they owe such misprized obligations, in their drowsy ears. On any other principle, I cannot conceive how painters (not without genius or industry) can fling themselves at the head of the public in the manner they do, having lives written of themselves, busts made of themselves, prints stuck in the shop-windows of themselves, and their names placed in "the first row of the rubric," with those of Rubens, Raphael, and Michael Angelo, swearing by themselves or their proxies that these glorified spirits would do well to leave the abodes of the blest in order to stand in mute wonder and with uplifted hands before some production of theirs, which is yet hardly dry! Oh! whatever you do, leave that string untouched. It will jar the rash and unhallowed hand that meddles with it. Profane not the mighty dead by mixing them up with the uncanonized living. Leave yourself a reversion in immortality, beyond the noisy clamor of the day. Do not quite lose your respect for public opinion by making it in all cases a palpable cheat, the echo of your own lungs that are hoarse with calling on the world to admire. Do not think to bully posterity, or to cozen your contemporaries. Be not always anticipating the effect of your picture on the town—think more about deserving success than commanding it. In issuing so many promissory notes upon the bank of fame, do not forget you have to pay in sterling gold. Believe that there is something in the pursuit of high art, beyond the manufacture of a paragraph or the collection of receipts at the door of

an exhibition. Venerate art as art. Study the works of others, and inquire into those of nature. Gaze at beauty. Become great by great efforts, and not by pompous pretensions. Do not think the world was blank to merit before your time, nor make the reputation of great geniuses the stalking horse to your vanity. You have done enough to insure yourself attention: you have now only to do something to deserve it, and to make good all that you have aspired to do!

There is a silent and systematic assumption of superiority which is as barefaced and unprincipled an imposture as the most impudent puffing. You may, by a tacit or avowed censure on all other arts, on all works of art, on all other pretensions, tastes, talents, but your own, produce a complete ostracism in the world of intellect, and leave yourself and your own performances alone standing in mighty nothingness in an universal waste and wreck of genius. By cutting away the rude block and removing the rubbish from around it, the idol may be effectually exposed to view, placed on its pedestal of pride, without any other assistance. This method is more inexcusable than the other. For there is no egotism or vanity so hateful as that which strikes at our satisfaction in everything else, and derives its nourishment from preying, like the vampyre, on the carcase of others' reputation. I would rather, in a word, that a man should talk for ever of himself with vain senseless assurance, than preserve a malignant, heartless silence, when the merit of a rival is mentioned. I have seen affectation in both, and can put up pretty well between them.

There is no great harm in putting forward one's own pretensions (of whatever kind) if this does not bear a sour, malignant aspect towards others. Every one sets himself off to the best advantage he can, and tries to steal a march upon his neighbour, as he shall: the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players. Life itself is a piece of theatrical ostentation. A great house, over your head, is not necessary to admit the light into the great room with it. Dress, equipage, title, every man's address, are only so many puffs and decoys and allurements to the sight of mortals. The starting hare is the most welcome to the sportsman, and the fluttering game, with the pos-

sessor inherits from a long line of illustrious ancestors! How much honor and honesty have been forfeited to be graced with a title or a ribbon; how much genius and worth have sunk to the grave, without an escutcheon and without an epitaph!

As men of rank and fortune keep lacqueys to reinforce their claims to self-respect, so men of genius sometimes surround themselves with a *coterie* of admirers to increase their reputation with the public. These *proneurs*, or satellites, repeat all their good things, laugh loud at all their jokes, and remember all their oracular decrees. They are their shadows and echoes. They talk of them in all companies, and bring back word of all that has been said about them. They hawk the good qualities of their patrons, as shopmen and *barkers* tease you to buy goods. I have no notion of this vanity at second-hand; nor can I see how this servile testimony from inferiors ("some followers of mine own") can be a proof of merit. It may soothe the ear; but that it should impose on the understanding, I own surprises me: yet there are persons who cannot exist without a *cortége* of this kind about them, in which they smiling read the opinion of the world, in the midst of all sorts of rancorous abuse and hostility, as Otho called for his mirror in the Illyrian field. One good thing is, that this evil, in some degree, cures itself; and when a man has been nearly ruined by a herd of these sycophants, he finds them leaving him, like thriftless dependents, for some more eligible situation, carrying away with them all the tattle they can pick up, and some left-off suit of finery. The same proneness to adulation which made them lick the dust before one idol, makes them bow as low to the rising Sun; they are as lavish of detraction as they were prurient with praise; and the *protegé* and admirer of the editor of the ——— figures in Blackwood's train. The man is a lacquey, and it is of little consequence whose livery he wears!

I would advise those who volunteer the office of puffing, to go the whole length of it. No half-measures will do. Lay it on thick and three-fold, or not at all. If you are once harnessed into that vehicle, it will be in vain for you to think of stopping. You must drive to the devil at once. The mighty Tamburlane, to whose car you are yoked, cries out

"Harlow, you gentlemen of Drury Lane,
Can't you find out some lucky hour to come?"

He has you on the hip, for you have pledged your taste and judgment to his genius. Never bear but he will drive this wedge. If you are once screwed into such a machine, you must extricate yourself by main force. No hyperboles are too much: any drawback, any admiration on this side idolatry, is high treason. It is an unpardonable offence to say that the last production of your patron is not so good as the one before it; or that a performer shines more in one character than another. I remember once hearing a player declare that he never looked into any newspapers or magazines on account of the abuse that was always levelled at himself in them, though there were not less than three persons in company, who made it their business through those confounded pipes of fame to "cry him up to the top of the compass." This sort of expectation is a little *exigéante!*

One fashionable mode of acquiring reputation is by patronising it. This may be from various motives, real good nature, good taste, vanity, or pride. I shall only speak of the spurious ones in this place. The quack and the *would-be* patron are well met. The house of the latter is a sort of curiosity shop or *menagerie*, where all sorts of intellectual pretenders and grotesques, musical children, artificial prodigies, occult philosophers, lecturers, *improvisatori*, apes, chemists, fiddlers, and buffoons are to be seen for the asking, and are shewn to the company for nothing. The table-drawers are thrown open, and display a confusion that the world cannot parallel again. There may be a few persons of common sense and established reputation, *rari nantes in gurgite vasto*, otherwise it is a mere scramble or lottery. The professed encourager of *rarities* and *curiosities* being disappointed at the great names, sends out into the highways for the mob, the lame and the blind, for all who pass of tender nerves, debtors, and cripples, for all the disposable variety or affectation floating in the town, to help out, among so many additions, chance may bring a set of people, of whom he may have the good fortune to approve in some way or other, as a part of day's entertainment. The art is to encourage [illegible] to bring forward character and unnoticed merit. You forget a

set of novices and raw pretenders about you, whose actual productions do not interfere with your self-love, and whose future efforts may reflect credit on your singular sagacity and faculty for finding out talent in the germ; and in the next place, by having them completely in your power, you are at liberty to dismiss them whenever you will, and to supply the deficiency by a new set of wondering, unwashed faces, in a rapid succession; an "aiery of children," embryo actors, artists, poets, or philosophers. Like unfledged birds they are hatched, nursed, and fed by hand; this gives room for a vast deal of management, meddling, care, and condescending solicitude, but the instant the callow brood are fledged, they are driven from the nest, and forced to shift for themselves in the wide world. One sterling production decides the question between them and their patrons, and from that time they become the property of the public. Thus a succession of importunate, hungry, idle, over-weening candidates for fame, are encouraged by these fickle keepers, only to be betrayed, and left to starve or beg, or pine in obscurity, while the man of merit and respectability is neglected, discountenanced, and stigmatized, because he will not lend himself as a tool to this system of splendid imposition, or pamper the luxury and weaknesses of the Vulgar Great. When a young artist is too independent to subscribe to the dogmas of his superiors, or fulfils their predictions and prognostics of wonderful contingent talent too soon, so as to get out of leading strings, and lean on public opinion for partial support, exceptions are taken to his dress, dialect, or manners, and he is expelled the circle with a character for ingratitude and treachery. None can procure toleration long but those who do not contradict the opinions, or excite the jealousy of their betters. One independent step is an appeal from them to the public, their natural and hated rivals, and annuls the contract between them, which implies ostentatious countenance on the one part, and servile submission on the other. But enough of this.

The patronage of men of talent, even when it proceeds from vanity, is often carried on with a spirit of generosity and magnificence, as long as these are in difficulties and a state of dependence: but as the principle of action in this case is a love of power, the complacency in the object of friendly regard ceases

with the opportunity or necessity for the same manifest display of power: and when the unfortunate *protégé* is just coming to land, and expects a last helping hand, he is, to his surprise, pushed back, in order that he may be saved from drowning once more. You are not hauled ashore, as you had supposed, by these kind friends, as a natural triumph after all your struggles and their exertions in your behalf. It is a piece of presumption in you to be seen walking on *terra-firma*: you are required, at the risk of their friendship, to be always swimming in troubled waters, that they may have the credit of throwing out ropes and sending out life-boats to you, without ever bringing you ashore. Your successes, your reputation, which you would think would please them, as justifying their good opinion, are coldly received, and looked at askance, because they remove your dependence on them: if you are under a cloud, they do all they can to keep you there by their good-will: they are so sensible of your gratitude that they wish your obligations never to cease, and take care you shall owe no one else a good turn; and provided you are compelled or contented to remain always in poverty, obscurity, and disgrace, they will continue your very good friends and humble servants to command, to the end of the chapter. The tenure of these indentures is hard. Such persons will wilfully forfeit the gratitude created by years of friendship, by refusing to perform the last act of kindness that is likely ever to be demanded of them: they will lend you money, if you have no chance of repaying them: will give you their good word, if nobody will be moved by it: and the only thing they do not forgive is an attempt or probability on your part of being able to repay your obligations. There is something disinterested in all this: at least, it does not show a cowardly or mercenary disposition, but it savours too much of arrogance and arbitrary pretension. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] he said, "Because great [illegible] have their

mouths stopped." Garrick was not in this predicament: he could amuse the company in the drawing-room by imitating the great moralist and lexicographer, and make the negro boy, in the court-yard, die with laughing to see him take off the swelling airs and strut of the turkey-cock. This was clever and amusing, but it did not involve an opinion, it did not lead to a difference of sentiment, in which the owner of the house might be found in the wrong. Players, singers, dancers, are hand and glove with the great. They embellish, and have an *éclat* in their names, but do not come into collision. Eminent portrait painters, again, are tolerated, because they come into personal contact with the great: and sculptors hold equality with lords when they have a certain quantity of solid marble in their workshops to answer for the solidity of their pretensions. People of fashion and property must have something to show for their patronage, something visible or tangible. A sentiment is a visionary thing; an argument may lead to dangerous consequences, and those who are likely to broach either one or the other, are not, therefore, fit for good company in general. Poets, and men of genius, who find their way there, soon find their way out. They are not of *that ilk*, with some exceptions. Painters who come in contact with majesty get on by servility or buffoonery, by letting themselves down in some way, Sir Joshua was never a favorite at court. He kept too much at a distance. Beechey gained a vast deal of favor by familiarity, and lost it by taking too great freedoms.* West ingratiated himself in the same quarter by means of practices as little creditable to himself as his august employer, namely, by playing the hypocrite, and professing sentiments the reverse of those he naturally felt. Kings (I know not how justly) have been said to be lovers of low company, and low conversation. They are

* Sharp became a great favorite of the king on the following occasion. It was the custom, when the king went through the lobbies of the palace, for those who preceded him to cry out, "Sharp, sharp, look sharp." Mr. Sharp, who was waiting in a room just by (preparing some colors), hearing his name repeated so urgently, ran out in great haste, and came up with all his force against the king, who was passing the door at the time. The young artist was knocked down in the encounter, and the attendants were in the greatest consternation; but the king laughed heartily at the adventure, and took great notice of the unfortunate subject of it from that time forward

also said to be fond of dirty practical jokes. If the fact is so, the reason is as follows. From the elevation of their rank, aided by pride and flattery, they look down on the rest of mankind, and would not be thought to have all their advantages for nothing. They wish to maintain the same precedence in private life that belongs to them as a matter of outward ceremony. This pretension they cannot keep up by fair means; for in wit or argument they are not superior to the common run of men. They therefore answer a repartee by a practical joke, which turns the laugh against others, and cannot be retaliated with safety. That is, they avail themselves of the privilege of their situation to take liberties, and degrade those about them, as they can only keep up the idea of their own dignity by proportionably lowering their company.

ESSAY XXXII.

On the Picturesque and Ideal. A Fragment.

The natural in visible objects is whatever is ordinarily presented to the senses; the picturesque is that which stands out, and catches the attention by some striking peculiarity: the *ideal* is that which answers to the preconceived imagination and appetite in the mind for love and beauty. The picturesque depends chiefly on the principle of discrimination or contrast; the *ideal* on harmony and continuity of effect: the one surprises, the other satisfies the mind; the one starts off from a given point, the other reposes on itself; the one is determined by an excess of form, the other by a concentration of feeling.

The picturesque may be considered as something like an excrescence on the face of nature. It runs imperceptibly into the fantastical and grotesque. Fairies and satyrs are picturesque; but they are scarcely *ideal*. They are an extreme and unique conception of a certain thing, but not of what the mind delights in, or broods fondly over. The image created by the artist's hand is not moulded and fashioned by the love of good and yearning after grace and beauty, but rather the contrary: that is, they are ideal deformity, not ideal beauty. Rubens was perhaps the most picturesque of painters; but he was almost the least *ideal*. So Rembrandt was (out of sight) the most picturesque of colorists; as Correggio was the most *ideal*. In other words, his composition of light and shade is more a whole, more in unison, more blended into the same harmonious feeling than Rembrandt's, who staggers by contrast, but does not soothe by gradation. Correggio's forms, indeed, had a picturesque air; for they often incline (even when most beautiful) to the quaintness of caricature. Vandyke, I think, was at once the least picturesque and least *ideal* of all the great painters. He was purely natural, and neither selected from outward

contrast of earth and sky. Earth, in his copies, is rough and hairy; and Pan has struck his hoof against it! A camel is a picturesque ornament in a landscape or a history-piece. This is not merely from its romantic and oriental character; for an elephant has not the same effect, and if introduced as a necessary appendage, is also an unwieldy incumbrance. A negro's head in a group is picturesque from contrast: so are the spots on a panther's hide. This was the principle that Paul Veronese went upon, who said the rule for composition was *black upon white and white upon black*. He was a pretty good judge. His celebrated picture of the Marriage of Cana is in all likelihood the completest piece of workmanship extant in the art. When I saw it, it nearly covered one side of a large room in the Louvre (being itself forty feet by twenty)—and it seemed as if that side of the apartment was thrown open, and you looked out at the open sky, at buildings, marble pillars, galleries with people in them, emperors, female slaves, Turks, negroes, musicians, all the famous painters of the time, the tables loaded with viands, goblets, and dogs under them—a sparkling, overwhelming confusion, a bright, unexpected reality—the only fault you could find was that no miracle was going on in the faces of the spectators: the only miracle there was the picture itself! A French gentleman, who showed me this "triumph of painting" (as it has been called), perceiving I was struck with it, observed, "My wife admires it exceedingly for the facility of the execution." I took this proof of sympathy for a compliment. It is said that when Humboldt, the celebrated traveller and naturalist, was introduced to Buonaparte, the Emperor addressed him in these words—"*Vous aimez la botanique, Monsieur*"—and on the other's replying in the affirmative, added "*Et ma femme aussi!*" This has been found fault with as a piece of brutality and insolence in the great man by bigoted critics, who do not know what a thing it is to get a Frenchwoman to agree with them in any point. For my part, I took the observation as it was meant, and it did not put me out of conceit with myself or the picture that Madame M—— liked it as well as *Monsieur l'Anglois*. Certainly, there could be no harm in that. By the side of it happened to be hung two allegorical pictures of

in Claude. He is all softness and proportion; the other is all

gether with capricious wantonness. Claude has more repose:

beyond its natural beauty, and it seems as if there could be no end to the delight taken in it. A number of sheep coming to a pool of water to drink, with shady trees in the back-ground, the rest of the flock following them, and the shepherd and his dog left carelessly behind, is surely the *ideal* in landscape-composition, if the *ideal* has its source in the interest excited by a subject, in its power of drawing the affections after it linked in a golden chain, and in the desire of the mind to dwell on it for ever. The *ideal*, in a word, is the height of the pleasing, that which satisfies and accords with the inmost longing of the soul: the picturesque is merely a sharper and bolder impression of reality. A morning mist drawing a slender veil over all objects is at once picturesque and *ideal;* for it in the first place excites immediate surprise and admiration, and in the next a wish for it to continue, and a fear lest it should be too soon dissipated. Is the Cupid riding on a lion in the ceiling at Whitehall, and urging him with a spear over a precipice, with only clouds and sky beyond, most picturesque or *ideal?* It has every effect of startling contrast and situation, and yet inspires breathless expectation and wonder for the event. Rembrandt's Jacob's Dream, again, is both—fearful to the eye, but realizing that loftiest vision of the soul. Take two faces in Leonardo da Vinci's Last Supper, the Judas and the St. John; the one is all strength, repulsive character, the other is all divine grace and mild sensibility. The individual, the characteristic in painting, is that *which is* in a marked manner—the *ideal* is that which we wish anything to be, and to contemplate without measure and without end. The first is truth, the last is good. The one appeals to the sense and understanding, the other to the will and the affections. The truly beautiful and grand attracts the mind to it by instinctive harmony, is absorbed in it, and nothing can ever part them afterwards. Look at a Madonna of Raphael's: what gives the *ideal* character to the expression,—the insatiable purpose of the soul, or its measureless content in the object of its contemplation? A portrait of Vandyke's is mere indifference and still-life in the comparison: it has not in it the principle of growing and still unsatisfied desire. In the *ideal* there is no fixed stint or limit but the limit of possibility: it is the infinite with respect to human capacities and wishes. Love is

for this reason an *ideal* passion. We give to it our all of hope, of fear, of present enjoyment, and stake our last chance of happiness wildly and desperately upon it. A good authority puts into the mouth of one of his heroines —

> "My [illegible] is as deep as the sea,
> My [illegible] as deep" —

How many fair catechumens will there be found in all ages to repeat as much after Shakspeare's Juliet!

ESSAY XXXIII.

The Main Chance.

"Search then the ruling passion: there alone
The wild are constant, and the cunning known,
The fool consistent, and the false sincere:
This clue once found unravels all the rest,
The prospect clears, and Wharton stands confest."—POPE.

I AM one of those who do not think that mankind are exactly governed by reason or a cool calculation of consequences. I rather believe that habit, imagination, sense, passion, prejudice, words, make a strong and frequent diversion from the right line of prudence and wisdom. I have been told, however, that these are merely the irregularities and exceptions, and that reason forms the rule or basis; that the understanding, instead of being the sport of the capricious and arbitrary decisions of the will, generally dictates the line of conduct it is to pursue, and that self interest or the *main chance* is the unvarying load-star of our affections or the chief ingredient in all our motives, that thrown in as ballast gives steadiness and direction to our voyage through life. I will not take upon me to give a verdict in this cause as judge; but I will try to plead one side of it as an advocate, perhaps a biased and feeble one.

As the passions are to be subject to the control of reason, and as reason is resolved (in the present case) into an attention to our own interest or a practical sense of the value of money, it will not be amiss to inquire how much of this principle itself is founded in a rational estimate of things or is calculated for the end it proposed, or how much of it will turn out (when analysed) to be mere madness and folly, or a mixture, like all the rest, of obstinacy, whim, fancy, vanity, ill-nature, and so forth, or a nominal pursuit of good. This passion or an inordinate love of wealth shows

those cases which may plead poverty as their excuse, what shall we say to a lady of fortune (the sister of an old-fashioned Scotch laird) allowing the fruit to rot in the gardens and hot-houses of a fine old mansion in large quantities sooner than let any of it be given away in presents to the neighbors, and when peremptorily ordered by the master of the house to send a basket-full every morning to a sick friend, purchasing a small pottle for the purpose, and satisfying her mind (an intelligent and well-informed one) with this miserable subterfuge? Nay farther, the same person, whenever they had green peas or other rarities served up at table, could hardly be prevailed on to help the guests to them, but if possible sent them away, though no other use could now be made of them, and she would never see them again! Is there common sense in this; or is it not more like madness? But is it not, at the same time, human nature? Let us stop to explain a little. In my view, the real motive of action in this and other similar cases of grasping penuriousness has no more reference to self-love (properly so called) than artificial fruit and flowers have to natural ones. A certain form or outside appearance of utility may deceive the mind, but natural, pulpy, wholesome, nutritious substance, the principle of vitality is gone. To this callous, frigid habit of mind the real uses of things harden and crystallize; the pith and marrow are extracted out of them, leaving nothing but the husk or shell. By a regular process, the idea of property is gradually abstracted from the advantage it may be of even to ourselves; and to a well-drilled, thorough-bred Northern housekeeper (such as I have spoken of) the fruits or other produce of her garden would come at last to be things no more to be eaten or enjoyed than her jewels or trinkets, which are professedly of no use but to be *kept* as symbols of wealth, to be occasionally looked at, and carefully guarded from the approach of any unhallowed touch.

The calculation of consequences or of benefit to accrue to any living person is so far from being the main spring in this mechanical operation that it is never once thought of, or regarded with peevishness and impatience as an unwelcome intruder, because it must naturally divert the mind from the warped and false bias it has taken. The feeling of property is here removed from the

sphere of practice to a chimerical and fictitious one. In the case of not sending the fragments out of the house, there might be some pretext in their being possibly wanted at home, that they might be sent to some one else, or made up into preserves: but when different articles of food are actually placed on the table, to hang back from using or offering them to others, is a downright infatuation. They *must* be destroyed, they *could not* appear again; and yet this person's heart failed her and shrank back from the only opportunity of making the proper use of them, with a petty, sensitive apprehension, as if it were a kind of sacrilege done to a cherished and favourite object. The impulse to save was become by indulgence a sort of desperate propensity and forlorn hope, no longer the understood means, but the mistaken end: habit had completely superseded the exercise and control of reason, and the rage of sparing the most of everything *by making none of it at all* [illegible] the last [illegible] prospect of finishing a [illegible] dish of green peas (that [illegible]) [illegible] as an outrage against the Goddess of Stinginess and torture to the soul of Thrift! The principle of economy is in- [illegible] possibility of wasting anything [illegible] housewives [illegible]

[illegible]

as much as the impugning any article of her religious or moral creed could have done. The very truisms and literal refinements of this passion are then sheer impertinence. The housekeeper came into the parlor of a "*big ha' house*," in the same land of cakes and hospitality, to say that the workmen had refused to eat their dinner.—"Why so?"—Because there was nothing but sowins and sour milk.—"Then they must go without a dinner," said the young mistress, delighted; "there is nothing else in the house for them." Yet the larder at that time groaned with cold rounds of beef, hams, pastries, and other plentiful remains of a huge entertainment the day before. This was flippancy and ill-nature, as well as a wrong notion of self-interest. Is it at all wonderful that a decent servant-girl, when applied to, to go to this place, laughed at the idea of a service where there was nothing to eat? Yet this attention to the *main chance* on her part, had it come to the lady's knowledge, would have been treated as a great piece of insolence. So little conception have such people of their own obligations or the claims of others!

The clergyman of the parish (prolific in this sort of anecdote), a hearty, good sort of man enough, but irritable withal, took it into his head to fly into a violent passion if ever he found the glasses or spoons left out in the kitchen, and he always went into the kitchen to look after this sort of excitement. He pretended to be mightily afraid that the one would be broken (to his irreparable loss) and the other stolen, though there was no danger of either: he wanted an excuse to fret and fume about something. On the death of his wife he sent for her most intimate friend to condole and consult with, and having made some necessary arrangements, begged as a peculiar favor that she would look into the kitchen to see if the glasses and silver spoons were in their places. She repressed a smile at such a moment out of regard to his feelings, which were serious and acute; but burst into a fit of unrestrained laughter as soon as she got home. So ridiculous a thing is human nature, even to ourselves! Either our actions are absurd or we are absurd, in our constant censure and exposure of others. I would not from choice go into these details, but I might be required to fill up a vague outline; and the examples of folly, spite,

and meanness are unfortunately "sown like a thick scurf o'er life!"

Let us turn the tables and look at the other side of this sober, solid, engrossing passion for property and its appendages. A man lays out a thousand, nay, sometimes several thousand pounds in purchasing a fine picture. This is thought by the vulgar a very fantastical folly and unaccountable waste of money. Why so? No one would give such a sum for a picture, unless there were others ready to offer nearly the same sum, and who are likely to appreciate its value and envy him the distinction. It is then a sign of taste, a proof of wealth to possess it; it is an ornament and a luxury. If the same person lays out the same sum of money in building or purchasing a fine house, or furnishing it with costly furniture, no notice is taken. This is supposed to be perfectly natural and in order. Yet both are equally [illegible] extravagance, and the value of the objects is in either case equally *ideal*. It would be asked, "But what is the use of the picture?" And what, pray, is the use of the fine house or costly furniture unless to be looked at, to be admired, and to display the taste and magnificence of the owner? Are not pictures and statues as much furniture as gilt plate or tapestries; [illegible] the circumstance of the former having a meaning in them and [illegible] to the imagination as well as to the senses [illegible]

[illegible]

We are at least as fond of [illegible]

If a man runs through a fortune in the way here spoken of, is it out of love to himself? Yet who scruples to run through a fortune in this way, or accuses himself of any extraordinary disinterestedness or love of others? One bed is as much as any one can sleep in, one room is as much as he can dine in, and he may have another for study or to retire to after dinner; but he can only want more than this for the accommodation of his friends or the admiration of the stranger. At Fonthill Abbey (to take an extreme illustration) there was not a single room fit to sit, lie, or stand in: the whole was cut up into pigeon holes, or spread out into long endless galleries. The building this huge, ill-assorted pile cost, I believe, nearly a million of money; and if the circumstance was mentioned, it occasioned an expression of surprise at the amount of the wealth that had been thus squandered; but if it was said that a hundred pounds had been laid out on a highly finished picture, there was the same astonishment expressed at its misdirection. The sympathetic auditor makes up his mind to the first and greatest outlay, by reflecting that in case of the worst the building materials alone will fetch something considerable; for in the very idea of stone walls and mortar there is something solid and tangible, that repels the charge of frivolous levity or fine sentiment. This quaint excrescence in architecture, preposterous and ill-constructed as it was, occasioned, I suspect, many a heartache and bitter comparison to the throng of fashionable visitants; and I conceive it was the very want of comfort and convenience that enhanced this feeling, by magnifying as it were from contrast the expense that had been incurred in realizing an idle whim. When we judge thus perversely and invidiously of the employment of wealth by others, I cannot think that we are guided in our own choice of means to ends by a simple calculation of downright use and personal accommodation.

The gentleman who purchased Fonthill, and was supposed to be possessed of wealth enough to purchase half a dozen more Fonthills, lived there himself for some time in a state of the greatest retirement; rose at six, and read till four, rode out for an hour for the benefit of the air, and dined abstemiously for the sake of his health. I could do all this myself. What then became of the rest of his fortune? It was lying in the funds or embarked in

tion, of something to be known and remembered by, the paramount consideration? And are not the privations we undergo, the sacrifices and exertions we make for either object nearly akin? A child makes a huge snow-ball to show his skill and perseverance, and as something to wonder at, not that he can swallow it as an ice, or warm his hands at it, and though the next day's sun will dissolve it; and the man accumulates a pile of wealth for the same reason principally, or to find employment for his time, his imagination, and his will. I deny that to watch and superintend the return of millions can be of any other use to him than to watch the returns of the heavenly bodies, or to calculate their distances, or to contemplate eternity, or infinity, or the sea, or the dome of St. Peter's, or any other object that excites curiosity and interest from its magnitude and importance. Do we not look at the most barren mountain with thrilling awe and wonder? And is it strange that we should gaze at a mountain of gold with satisfaction, when we can besides say, "This is ours, with all the power that belongs to it?" Every passion, however plodding or prosaic, has its poetical side. A miser is the true alchemist, the magician in his cell, who overlooks a mighty experiment, who sees dazzling visions, and who wields the will of others at his nod, but to whom all other hopes or pleasures are dead, and who is cut off from all connexion with his kind. He lives in a splendid hallucination, a walking trance, and so far it is well: but if he thinks he has any other need or use for all this endless store (any more than to swill the ocean) he deceives himself, and is no conjuror after all. He goes on, however, mechanically adding to his stock, and fancying that great riches is great gain, that every particle that swells the heap is something in reserve against the evil day, and a defence against that poverty which he dreads more the farther he is removed from it, as the more giddy the height to which we have attained, the more frightful does the gulph yawn below—so easily does habit get the mastery of reason, and so nearly is passion allied to madness!—But he is laying up for his heirs and successors:—in toiling for them, and sacrificing himself, is he properly attending to the *main chance?*

This is the turn the love of money takes in cautious, dry, recluse, and speculative minds. If it were the pure and abstract

love of money, it could take no other turn but this. But in a different class of characters, the sociable, the vain, and imaginative, it takes just the contrary one, viz. to expense, extravagance, and ostentation. [illegible] loves to display itself in every [illegible] shape and with every reflected lustre; in houses, in equipage, in dress, in a retinue of friends and dependents, [illegible] in the eyes of fashion, to be courted by [illegible], and [illegible] for a while like a bubble on the surface of [illegible] and [illegible] irrecoverably in an abyss of ruin and bankruptcy. Does it foresee this result? Does it care for it? What [illegible] of the calculating principle that can be [illegible]? Does [illegible] in this critical emergency? It is blind, deaf, and insensible to all [illegible]? One [illegible] the vanity of associating with lords, another by his love of low company; one by his fondness for [illegible], another by his taste [illegible] [illegible]

Madame D'Arblay's account of Harrel in "Cecilia;" and though the picture is highly wrought and carried to the utmost length, yet I maintain that the principle is common. I myself have known more than one individual in the same predicament; and therefore cannot think that the deviations from the line of strict prudence and wisdom are so rare or trifling as the theory I am opposing represents them, or I must have been singularly unfortunate in my acquaintance. Out of a score of persons of this class I could mention several that have ruined their fortunes out of mere freak, others that are in a state of dotage and imbecility for fear of being robbed of all they are worth. The rest care nothing about the matter. So that this boasted and unfailing attention to the *main chance* resolves itself, when strong, into mad profusion or griping penury, or if weak, is null and yields to other motives. Such is the conclusion to which my observation of life has led me: if I am quite wrong, it is hard that in a world abounding in such characters, I should not have met with a single practical philosopher.*

A girl in a country town resolves never to marry any one under a duke or a lord. Good. This may be very well as an ebullition of spleen or vanity; but is there much common sense or regard to her own satisfaction in it? Were there any likelihood of her succeeding in her resolution, she would not make it; for it is the very distinction to be attained that piques her ambition, and leads her to gratify her conceit of herself by affecting to look down on any lower matches. Let her suffer ever so much

* Mr. Bentham proposes to new-model the penal code on the principle of a cool and systematic calculation of consequences. Yet of all philosophers, the candidates for Panopticons and Penitentiaries are the most short-sighted and refractory. Punishment has scarcely any effect upon them. Thieves steal under the scaffold; and if a person's previous feelings and habits do not prevent his running the risk of the gallows, be assured that the fear of consequences or his having already escaped it with all the good resolutions he may have made on the occasion, will not prevent his exposing himself to it a second time. It is true most people have a natural aversion to being hanged. The perseverance of culprits in their evil courses seems a fatality, which is strengthened by the prospect of what is to follow. Mr Bentham argues, that all men act from calculation, "even madmen reason." So far it may be true that the world is not unlike a great Bedlam, or answers to the title of an old play—"A mad world my masters."

Or take the passion of love where it has other objects and consequences in view. Is reason any match for the poison of this passion, where it has been once imbibed? I might just as well be told that reason is a cure for madness or the bite of a venomous serpent. Are not health, fortune, friends, character, peace of mind, everything sacrificed in its idlest impulse? Are the instances rare, or are they not common and tragical? The *main chance* does not serve the turn here. Does the prospect of certain ruin break the fascination to its frail victim, or does it not render the conquest more easy and secure that the seducer has already triumphed over and deserted a hundred other victims? A man *à bonnes fortunes* is the most irresistible person in the lists of gallantry. Take drunkenness again, that vice which till within these few years (and even still) was fatal to the health, the constitution, the fortunes of so many thousands, and the peace of so many families in Great Britain. I would ask what remonstrance of friends, what lessons of experience, what resolutions of amendment, what certainty of remorse and suffering, however exquisite, would deter the confirmed sot (where the passion for this kind of excitement had once become habitual and the immediate want of it was felt) from indulging his propensity and taking his full swing, notwithstanding the severe and imminent punishment to follow upon his excess? The consequence of not abstaining from his favorite beverage is not doubtful and distant (a thing in the clouds) but close to his side, staring him in the face, and felt perhaps in all its aggravations that very morning, yet the recollection of this and of the next day's dawn is of no avail against the momentary craving and headlong impulse given by the first application of the glass to his lips. The present temptation is indeed heightened by the threatened alternative. I know this as a rule, that the stronger the repentance, the surer the relapse and the more hopeless the cure! The being engrossed by the present moment, by the present feeling, whatever it be, whether of pleasure or pain, is the evident cause of both. Few instances have

only vain but criminal?"—"I would take the *Ghost's* word for a thousand pound," or in preference to that of any man living, though I was told in the streets of Edinburgh, that Dr. Jamieson, the author of the "Dictionary," was quite as great a man!

premises and independent evidences are the same. How few Calvinists become Lutherans! How few Papists Protestants! How few Tories Whigs!* Each shuts his eyes equally to facts or arguments, and persists in the view of the subject that custom, pride, and obstinacy, dictate. Interest is no more regarded than reason; for it is often at the risk both of life and fortune, that these opinions have been maintained, and it is uniformly when parties have run highest, and the strife has been deadliest, that people have been most forward to stake their existence and everything belonging to them on some unintelligible dogma or article of an old-fashioned creed.

Half the wars and fightings, martyrdoms, persecutions, feuds, antipathies, heart-burnings in the world have been about some distinction, "some trick not worth an egg"—so ready are mankind to sacrifice their all to a mere name! It may be urged, that the good of our souls, or our welfare in a future state of being, is a rational and well-grounded motive for these religious extravagances. And this is true, so far as religious zeal falls in with men's passions or the spirit of the times. A bigot was formerly ready to cut his neighbor's throat to go to Heaven, but not so ready to reform his own life, or give up a single vice or gratification, notwithstanding all the pains and penalties denounced upon it, and of which his faith in Holy Church did not suffer him to doubt a moment!

But it is contended here, that in matters not of doctrinal speculation, but of private life and domestic policy, every one consults and understands his own interest; that, whatever other *hobbies* he may have, he minds this as the main object, and contrives to make both ends meet, in spite of seeming inattention and real difficulties. "If we look around us," says a shrewd, hard-headed Scotchman, "and take examples from the neighborhood in which we live, we shall find that, allowing for occasional exceptions, diversities, and singularities, the *main chance* is still stuck to with rigid and unabated pertinacity—the accounts are wound up, and everything is right at the year's end, whatever freaks or fancies may have intervened in the course of it. The business of life

* *Certes*, more Whigs become Tories. This may also be accounted for satisfactorily though not very rationally

more than the *main chance*. The modern Scotch may be loyal on this thriving principle: their ancestors found their loyalty a very losing concern, yet they persevered in it till, and long after, it became a desperate cause. But patriotism and loyalty (true or false) are important and powerful principles in human affairs, though not always selfish and calculating. Honor is one great standard-bearer and puissant leader in the struggle of human life; and less than honor (a nickname or a bug-bear) is enough to set the multitude together by the ears, whether in civil, religious, or private brawls. But to return to our Edinburgh shop-keepers, those practical models of wisdom, and authentic epitomes of human nature. Say that by their "canny ways and pawky looks" they keep their names out of the "Gazette," yet still care (not the less perhaps) mounts behind their counters, and sits in their back-shops. A tradesman is not a bankrupt at the year's end. But what does it signify, if he is hen-pecked in the mean time, or quarrels with his wife, or beats his apprentices, or has married a woman twice as old as himself for her money, or has been jilted by his maid, or fuddles himself every night, or is laying in an apoplexy by over-eating himself, or is believed by nobody, or is a furious Whig or Tory, or a knave, or a fool, or one envious of the success of his neighbors, or dissatisfied with his own, or surly, or eaten up with indolence and procrastination, never easy but bashful and awkward in company (though with a vast desire to shine), or has some personal defect or weak sides on which the Devil is sure to assail him, and the venting his spleen and irritability on which, through some loop-hole or other, makes the real business and torment of his life—that of his shop may go on as it pleases. Such is the perfection of reason and the triumph of the sovereign good, where there are no strong passions to disturb, or no great vices to sully it! The humors collect, the will will have head, the petty passions ferment, and we start some grievance or other, and hunt it down every hour in the day, or the machine of *still-life* could not go on even in North Britain. But were I to grant the full force and extent of the objection, I should still say that it does not bear upon my view of the subject or general assertion, that reason is an unequal match for passion. Business is a kind of gaoler or task-master, and keeps his vassals in good

tion to elude or trifle with it. I see no courage in battle, but in going on what is called the *forlorn hope*.

2. Business is also an affair of habit: it calls for incessant and daily application; and what was at first a matter of necessity to supply our wants, becomes often a matter of necessity to employ our time. The man of business wants work for his head; the laborer and mechanic for his hands; so that the love of action, of difficulty of competition, the stimulus of success or failure is perhaps as strong an ingredient in men's ordinary pursuits as the love of gain. We find persons pursuing science or any *hobby-horsical* whim or handicraft that they have taken a fancy to, or persevering in a losing concern with just the same ardor and obstinacy. As to the choice of a pursuit in life, a man may not be forward to engage in business, but being once in, does not like to turn back amidst the pity of friends and the derision of enemies. How difficult is it to prevent those who have a turn for any art or science from going into these pursuits however unprofitable! Nay, how difficult is it often to prevent those who have no turn that way, but prefer starving to a certain income! If there is one in a family brighter than the rest, he is immediately designed for one of the learned professions. Really, the dull and plodding people of the world have not much reason to boast of their superior wisdom or numbers: they are in an involuntary majority!

3. The value of money is an *exchangeable* value; that is, this pursuit is available towards and convertible into a great many others. A person is in want of money, and mortgages an estate to throw it away upon a round of entertainments and company. The passion or motive here is not a hankering after money, and the individual will ruin himself for this object. Another who has the same passion for show, and a certain style of living, tries to gain a fortune in trade to indulge it, and only goes to work in a more round-about way. I remember a story of a common mechanic at Manchester, who laid out the hard-earned savings of the week in hiring a horse and livery-servant to ride behind him to Stockport every Sunday, and to dine there at an ordinary like a gentleman. The pains bestowed upon the *main chance* here was only a cover for another object, which exercised a ridiculous predominance over his mind. Money will purchase a horse, a house, a picture,

of the pursuits of fame or intellect. Yet all these are important and respectable divisions of the map of human life. Who ever charged Mr. Pitt with a want of common sense, because he did not die worth a plum? Had it been proposed to Lord Byron to forfeit every penny of his estate, or every particle of his reputation, would he have hesitated to part with the former? Is not a loss of character, a stain upon honor, as severe a blow as any reverse of fortune? Do not the richest heiresses in the city marry for a title, and think themselves well off? Are there not patriots who think or dream all their lives about their country's good; philanthropists who rave about liberty and humanity at a certain yearly loss? Are there not studious men who never once thought of bettering their circumstances? Are not the liberal professions held more respectable than business, though less lucrative? Might not most people do better than they do, but that they postpone their interest to their indolence, their taste for reading, their love of pleasure, or to some other influence? And is it not generally understood that all men can make a fortune or succeed in the *main chance*, who have but that one idea in their heads? Lastly, are there not those who pursue or husband wealth for their own good, for the benefit of their friends or the relief of the distressed? But as the examples are rare, and might be supposed to make against myself, I shall not insist upon them. I think I have said enough to vindicate or apologize for my first position—

> "Masterless passion sways us to the mood
> Of what it likes or loathes;"

—or if not to make good my ground, to march out with flying colors and beat of drum!

ESSAY XXXIV.

On Reason and Imagination.

I hate people who have no notion of anything but generalities and forms, and creeds, and abstract propositions, even worse than those who can see nothing but the individual and the particular. The former are apt to be very unfeeling and unjust in their dealings with mankind, from not knowing the persons they have to do with, or from not caring about them, when they are not brought before their eyes, or when they do not square with some favourite theory. Such persons are the worst kind of bigots, and the most incorrigible offenders against the peace and happiness of society. They are the blind leaders of the blind, and plunge others into the ditch of error and misery, because they do not see the way before them themselves. They are the slaves of words and of their own contracted maxims and rules of thumb, which they would force upon the universe, and which they would fain make the universe bend to, instead of bending themselves to the infinite variety of things. They are the dupes of their own want of sympathy with the world around them, and of their own want of imagination to see that it is not all of a piece with the little circle of their own thoughts and interests. They are the tools of their own and others' prejudices, and the victims of their own and others' passions, when these passions are not their own immediate and personal ones. They are the persons who, in the great transactions of life, are the most likely to overreach themselves, and to be overreached by others. They are the most credulous and the most distrustful, the most violent partisans and the most callous neutrals, the most active agents and the most helpless patients, the most talkative and the most silent, the most obstinate and the most irresolute, the most disputatious and the most passive, the most self-willed and the most self-abasing, the most opinionated and the most open to conviction, the most disposed to judge and the most disposed to be judged, the most severe and the most indulgent, the most quarrelsome and the most forgiving, the most impracticable and the most pliant, the most obtuse and the most quick-witted, the most ignorant and the most learned, the most foolish and the most wise. To

and the signs of the zodiac; for there they will meet with no petty details to boggle at, or contradict their vague conclusions. Such persons would make excellent theologians, but are very indifferent philosophers.—To pursue this geographical reasoning a little farther. They may say that the map of a county or shire, for instance, is too large, and conveys a disproportionate idea of its relation to the whole. And we say that their map of the globe is too small, and conveys no idea of it at all.

> ——— "In the world's volume
> Our Britain shows as of it, but not in it;
> In a great pool a swan's nest:"

but is it really so? What! the county is bigger than the map at any rate: the representation falls short of the reality, by a million degrees, and you would omit it altogether in order to arrive at a balance of power in the non-entities of the understanding, and call this keeping within the bounds of sense and reason; and whatever does not come within those self-made limits is to be set aside as frivolous or monstrous. But "there are more things between heaven and earth than were ever dreamt of in this philosophy." They cannot get them all in, *of the size of life*, and therefore they reduce them on a graduated scale, till they think they can. So be it, for certain necessary and general purposes, and in compliance with the infirmity of human intellect: but at other times, let us enlarge our conceptions to the dimensions of the original objects; nor let it be pretended that we have outraged truth and nature, because we have encroached on your diminutive mechanical standard. There is no language, no description that can strictly come up to the truth and force of reality: all we have to do is to guide our descriptions and conclusions by the reality. A certain proportion must be kept: we must not invert the rules of moral perspective. Logic should enrich and invigorate its decisions by the use of imagination; as rhetoric should be governed in its application, and guarded from abuse by the checks of the understanding. Neither, I apprehend, is sufficient alone. The mind can conceive only one or a few things in their integrity: if it proceeds to more, it must have recourse to artificial substitutes, and judge by comparison merely. In the former

the angles, it would be obvious to remark that the color had nothing to do with the question. But in a dispute whether two objects are colored alike, the discovery, that one is green and the other yellow, is fatal. So with respect to moral truth (as distinct from mathematical), whether a thing is good or evil, depends on the quantity of passion, of feeling, of pleasure and pain connected with it, and with which we must be made acquainted in order to come to a sound conclusion, and not on the inquiry whether it is round or square. Passion, in short, is the essence, the chief ingredient in moral truth; and the warmth of passion is sure to kindle the light of imagination on the objects around it. The "words that glow" are almost inseparable from the "thoughts that burn." Hence logical reason and practical truth are *disparates*. It is easy to raise an outcry against violent invectives, to talk aloud against extravagance and enthusiasm, to pick a quarrel with everything but the most calm, candid, and qualified statement of facts: but there are enormities to which no words can do adequate justice. Are we then, in order to form a complete idea of them, to omit every circumstance of aggravation, or to suppress every feeling of impatience that arises out of the details, lest we should be accused of giving way to the influence of prejudice and passion? This would be to falsify the impression altogether, to misconstrue reason, and fly in the face of nature. Suppose, for instance, that in the discussions on the Slave-Trade, a description to the life was given of the horrors of the *Middle Passage* (as it was termed), that you saw the manner in which thousands of wretches, year after year, were stowed together in the hold of a slave-ship, without air, without light, without food, without hope, so that what they suffered in reality was brought home to you in imagination, till you felt in sickness of heart as one of them, could it be said that this was a prejudging of the case, that your knowing the extent of the evil disqualified you from pronouncing sentence upon it, and that your disgust and abhorrence were the effects of a heated imagination? No. Those evils that inflame the imagination and make the heart sick, ought not to leave the head cool. This is the very test and measure of the degree of the enormity, that it involuntarily staggers and appals the mind. If it were a common iniquity, if it were slight and partial, or

or excessive? The rule is absolute; for we feel that nothing of the kind could take place, or be tolerated for an instant, in any system that was not rotten at the core. If such things are ever done in any circumstances with impunity, we know what must be done every day under the same sanction. It shows that there is an utter deadness to every principle of justice or feeling of humanity; and where this is the case, we may take out our tables of abstraction, and set down what is to follow through every gradation of petty, galling vexation, and wanton, unrelenting cruelty. A state of things, where a single instance of the kind can possibly happen without exciting general consternation, ought not to exist for half an hour. The parent, hydra-headed injustice ought to be crushed at once with all its viper brood. Practices, the mention of which makes the flesh creep, and that affront the light of day, ought to be put down the instant they are known, without inquiry and without repeal.

There was an example of eloquent moral reasoning connected with this subject, given in the work just referred to, which was not the less solid and profound, because it was produced by a burst of strong personal and momentary feeling. It is what follows:—"The name of a person having been mentioned in the presence of Naimbanna (a young African chieftain), who was understood by him to have publicly asserted something very degrading to the general character of Africans, he broke out into violent and vindictive language. He was immediately reminded of the Christian duty of forgiving his enemies; upon which he answered nearly in the following words:—'If a man should rob me of my money, I can forgive him: if a man should shoot at me, or try to stab me, I can forgive him; if a man should sell me and all my family to a slave-ship, so that we should pass all the rest of our days in slavery in the West Indies, I can forgive him; but' (added he, rising from his seat with much emotion), 'if a man takes away the character of the people of my country, I never can forgive him.' Being asked why he would not extend his forgiveness to those who took away the character of the people of his country, he answered: 'if a man should try to kill me, or should sell me and my family for slaves, he would do an injury to as many as he might kill or sell; but if any one takes away

point of view—in a moral sense they *cannot* be compensated. They hurt the public mind: they harden and sear the natural feelings. The evil is monstrous and palpable; the pretended good is remote and contingent. In morals, as in philosophy, *De non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio* What does not touch the heart, or come home to the feelings, goes comparatively for little or nothing. A benefit that exists merely in possibility, and is judged of only by the forced dictates of the understanding, is not a set off against an evil (say of equal magnitude in itself) that strikes upon the senses, that haunts the imagination, and lacerates the human heart. A spectacle of deliberate cruelty, that shocks every one that sees and hears of it, is not to be justified by any calculations of cold-blooded self-interest—is not to be permitted in any case. It is prejudged and self-condemned. Necessity has been therefore justly called "the tyrant's plea." It is no better with the mere doctrine of utility, which is the sophist's plea. Thus, for example, an infinite number of lumps of sugar put into Mr. Bentham's artificial ethical scales would never weigh against the pounds of human flesh or drops of human blood, that are sacrificed to produce them. The taste of the former on the palate is evanescent; but the others sit heavy on the soul. The one are an object to the imagination: the others only to the understanding. But man is an animal compounded both of imagination and understanding; and, in treating of what is good for man's nature, it is necessary to consider both. A calculation of the mere ultimate advantages, without regard to natural feelings and affections, may improve the external face and physical comforts of society, but will leave it heartless and worthless in itself. In a word, the sympathy of the individual with the consequences of his own act is to be attended to (no less than the consequences themselves) in every sound system of morality; and this must be determined by certain natural laws of the human mind, and not by rules of logic or arithmetic

The aspect of a moral question is to be judged of very much like the face of a country, by the projecting points, by what is striking and memorable, by that which leaves traces of itself behind, or "casts its shadow before." Millions of acres do not make a picture; nor the calculation of all the consequences in the

they were most authentic and infallible: not considering that from the extremes you may infer the means, but you cannot from the means infer the extremes in any case. It may be said that the extreme and individual cases may be retorted upon us:—I deny it, unless it be with truth. The imagination is an *associating* principle: and has an instinctive perception when a thing belongs to a system, or is only an exception to it. For instance, the excesses committed by the victorious besiegers of a town do not attach to the nation committing them, but to the nature of that sort of warfare, and are common to both sides. They may be struck off the score of national prejudices. The cruelties exercised upon slaves, on the other hand, grow out of the relation between master and slave; and the mind intuitively revolts at them as such. The cant about the horrors of the French Revolution is mere cant—everybody knows it to be so: each party would have retaliated upon the other: it was a civil war, like that for a disputed succession: the general principle of the right or wrong of the change remained untouched. Neither would these horrors have taken place, except from Prussian manifestos, and treachery within: there were none in the American, and have been none in the Spanish Revolution. The massacre of St. Bartholomew arose out of the principles of that religion which exterminates with fire and sword, and keeps no faith with heretics.—If it be said that nicknames, party watch-words, bugbears, the cry of "No Popery," &c., are continually played off upon the imagination with the most mischievous effect, I answer that most of these bugbears and terms of vulgar abuse have arisen out of abstruse speculation or barbarous prejudice, and have seldom had their root in real facts or natural feelings. Besides, are not general topics, rules, exceptions, endlessly bandied to and fro, and balanced one against the other by the most learned disputants? Have not three-fourths of all the wars, schisms, heart-burnings in the world begun on mere points of controversy?—There are two classes whom I have found given to this kind of reasoning against the use of our senses and feelings in what concerns human nature, *viz.*, knaves and fools. The last do it, because they think their own shallow dogmas settle all questions best without any further appeal: and the first do it, because they know that the refine-

boat, that is moved by the sole expansive power of words. Lord Byron has launched several of these ventures lately (if ventures they may be called) and may continue in the same strain as long as he pleases. We have not now a number of *dramatis personæ* affected by particular incidents and speaking according to their feelings, or as the occasion suggests, but each mounting the rostrum, and delivering his opinion on fate, fortune, and the entire consummation of things. The individual is not of sufficient importance to occupy his own thoughts or the thoughts of others. The poet fills his page with *grandes pensées*. He covers the face of nature with the beauty of his sentiments and the brilliancy of his paradoxes. We have the subtleties of the head, instead of the workings of the heart, and possible justifications instead of the actual motives of conduct. This all seems to proceed on a false estimate of individual nature and the value of human life We have been so used to count by millions of late, that we think the units that compose them nothing, and are so prone to trace remote principles, that we neglect the immediate results. As an instance of the opposite style of dramatic dialogue, in which the persons speak for themselves, and to one another, I will give, by way of illustration, a passage from an old tragedy, in which a brother has just caused his sister to be put to a violent death.

> "*Bosola.* Fix your eye here.
> *Ferdinand* Constantly.
> *Bosola.* Do you not weep?
> Other sins only speak; murther shrieks out:
> The element of water moistens the earth;
> But blood flies upwards, and bedews the heavens.
> *Ferdinand.* Cover her face: mine eyes dazzle; she died young,
> *Bosola.* I think not so: her infelicity
> Seem'd to have years too many.
> *Ferdinand* She and I were twins:
> And should I die this instant, I had lived
> Her time to a minute."
>
> DUCHESS OF MALFY, Act IV., Scene 2.

How fine is the constancy with which he first fixes his eye on the dead body, with a forced courage, and then, as his resolution wavers, how natural is his turning his face away, and the reflec-

tion that strikes him on their youth and beauty and on their death, and the thought that they were twins, and [illegible] lasting [illegible] by [illegible] up to the present period, as if all that was to come [illegible] were nothing! Now, I would fain ask whether there is not in this contemplation of the interval that separates the beginning [illegible] end of life, of a life [illegible] varied from good to ill, and [illegible] termination of which the person speaking has been the witness, and [illegible] cause enough to give the mind pause? Is not this revelation as it were of the whole extent of our being which is made by the flashes of passion and strokes of calamity, a subject sufficiently staggering to have place in legitimate tragedy? Are not the struggles of the will with untoward events and the adverse passions of others as interesting and [illegible] in the representation as [illegible] in the [illegible] of [illegible] these [illegible] from the [illegible] of [illegible] M[illegible] merely [illegible] still [illegible]: [illegible] the [illegible] in the [illegible] and the [illegible] from the heart! The interest we take in our own lives, in our [illegible] disappointments, and the home feelings that arise out of these, when well described, are the clearest and truest mirror in which we can see the image of human nature. For in this sense each man is a microcosm. What he is, the rest are—whatever his joys and sorrows are composed of, theirs are the same—no more, no less.

"[illegible] whole world kin."

But it must be the genuine touch of nature, not the outward [illegible] and varnish of art. [illegible] figure [illegible] no more answers [illegible] than the [illegible] the painter does. We may say [illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible] with [illegible]
[illegible]

M[illegible]) an [illegible] and [illegible] a [illegible] in the [illegible] of general humanity is at [illegible] an [illegible]

truths, and it is also the same truth a thousand times told. As is our perception of this original truth, the root of our imagination, so will the force and richness of the general impression proceeding from it be. The boundary of our sympathy is a circle which enlarges itself according to its propulsion from the centre—the heart. If we are imbued with a deep sense of individual weal or woe, we shall be awe-struck at the idea of humanity in general. If we know little of it but its abstract and common properties without their particular applications, their force or degrees, we shall care just as little as we know either about the whole or the individuals. If we understand the texture and vital feeling, we then can fill up the outline, but we cannot supply the former from having the latter given. Moral and poetical truth is like expression in a picture—the one is not to be attained by smearing over a large canvas, nor the other by bestriding a vague topic. In such matters, the most pompous sciolists are accordingly found to be the greatest contemners of human life. But I defy any great tragic writer to despise that nature which he understands, or that heart which he has probed, with all its rich bleeding materials of joy and sorrow. The subject may not be a source of much triumph to him, from its alternate light and shade, but it can never become one of supercilious indifference. He must feel a strong reflex interest in it, corresponding to that which he has depicted in the characters of others. Indeed, the object and end of playing, "both at the first and now, is to hold the mirror up to nature," to enable us to feel for others as for ourselves, or to embody a distinct interest out of ourselves by the force of imagination and passion. This is summed up in the wish of the poet—

> "To feel what others are, and know myself a man."

If it does not do this, it loses both its dignity and its proper use.

ESSAY XXXV.

ON RESPECTABLE PEOPLE.

well to say nothing of the matter, but to confine ourselves to the safer generality, that he is a person of the highest respectability: if he is a low dirty fellow, who has amassed an immense fortune, which he does not know what to do with, the possession of it alone will guarantee his respectability, if we say nothing of the manner in which he has come by it, or in which he spends it. A man may be a knave or a fool, or both (as it may happen), and yet be a most respectable man, in the common and authorized sense of the term, provided he saves appearances, and does not give common fame a handle for no longer keeping up the imposture. The best title to the character of respectability lies in the convenience of those who echo the cheat, and in the conventional hypocrisy of the world. Any one may lay claim to it who is willing to give himself airs of importance, and can find means to divert others from inquiring too strictly into his pretensions. It is a disposable commodity,—not a part of the man, that sticks to him like his skin, but an appurtenance, like his goods and chattels. It is meat, drink, and clothing to those who take the benefit of it by allowing others the credit. It is the current coin, the circulating medium, in which the factitious intercourse of the world is carried on, the bribe which interest pays to vanity. Respectability includes all that vague and undefinable mass of respect floating in the world, which arises from sinister motives in the person who pays it, and is offered to adventitious and doubtful qualities in the person who receives it. It is spurious and nominal; hollow and venal. To suppose that it is to be taken literally or applied to sterling merit, would betray the greatest ignorance of the customary use of speech. When we hear the word coupled with the name of any individual, it would argue a degree of romantic simplicity to imagine that it implies any one quality of head or heart, any one excellence of body or mind, any one good action or praiseworthy sentiment; but as soon as it is mentioned, it conjures up the ideas of a handsome house with large acres round it, a sumptuous table, a cellar well stocked with excellent wines, splendid furniture, a fashionable equipage, with a long list of elegant contingencies. It is not what a man *is*, but what he *has*, that we speak of in the significant use of this term. He may be the poorest creature in the world in himself, but if he is well

to do, and can spare some of his superfluities, if he can lend us his purse or his countenance upon occasion, [illegible] upon us [illegible] it is but fit that we should speak well of the bridge that carries us over, and in return for what we can get from him, we embody our servile gratitude, hopes, and fears, in this word *respectability*. By it we pamper his pride, and feed our own necessities. It must needs be a very honest and respected word that is the go-between in this disinterested kind of traffic. We don't think of applying this word to a great poet or a great painter, to the man of genius, or the man of virtue, for it is seldom we can *sponge* upon them. It would be a solecism for any one to pretend to the character who has a shabby coat to his back, who goes without a dinner, or has not a good house over his head. He who has withdrawn himself from the world by devoting himself to a particular study, or adhering to a particular cause, occasions only a smile of pity or a sneer of contempt at the mention of his name; while he who has raised himself in it by a different course, who has become rich for want of ideas, and powerful from want of principles, is looked up to with silent homage, and passes for a respectable man. "The learned pate ducks to the golden fool." We spurn at virtue and genius in rags; and lick the dust at the presence of vice and folly in purple. When Otway was left to starve after having produced "Venice Preserved," there was nothing in the pinched aspect with which he devoured the [illegible] to provoke the respect of the man who would have sneered at him for not knowing that he was a poet. Spenser was kept waiting for the hundred pounds which Burleigh grudged him "for a song," might [illegible] the statesman [illegible] Southey [illegible] Charles [illegible] B[illegible] the w[illegible] of [illegible] B[illegible] and the [illegible] w[illegible] [illegible] at

least in his life-time :—to oppress, to enslave, to cheat, and plunder it, is a much better way. "The time gives evidence of it." But the instances are common.

Respectability means a man's situation and success in life, not his character or conduct. The city merchant never loses his respectability till he becomes a bankrupt. After that, we hear no more of it or him. The Justice of the Peace, and the Parson of the parish, the Lord and the Squire, are allowed, by immemorial usage, to be very respectable people, though no one ever thinks of asking why. They are a sort of fixtures in this way. To take an example from one of them. The Country Parson may pass his whole time, when he is not employed in the cure of souls, in flattering his rich neighbors, and leaguing with them to *snub* his poor ones, in seizing poachers, and encouraging informers; he may be exorbitant in exacting his tithes, harsh to his servants, the dread and bye-word of the village where he resides, and yet all this, though it may be notorious, shall abate nothing of his respectability. It will not hinder his patron from giving him another living to play the petty tyrant in, or prevent him from riding over to the Squire's in his carriage and being well received, or from sitting on the bench of Justices with due decorum and clerical dignity. The poor Curate, in the mean time, who may be a real comfort to the bodies and minds of his parishioners, will be passed by without notice. Parson Adams, drinking his ale in Sir Thomas Booby's kitchen, makes no very respectable figure; but Sir Thomas himself was right worshipful, and his widow a person of honor!—A few such historiographers as Fielding would put an end to the farce of respectability, with several others like it. Peter Pounce, in the same author, was a consummation of this character, translated into the most vulgar English. The character of Captain Blifil, his epitaph, and funeral sermon, are worth tomes of casuistry and patched-up theories of moral sentiments. Pope somewhere exclaims, in his fine indignant way,

> "What can ennoble sots, or knaves, or cowards?
> Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards."

But this is the heraldry of poets, not of the world. In fact, the only way for a poet now-a-days to emerge from the obscurity

respectability at all varies from the standard of money. There things go as much by appearance as by weight; and he may be said to be a respectable man who cuts a certain figure in company by being dressed in the fashion, and venting a number of common-place things with tolerable grace and fluency. If a person there brings a certain share of information and good manners into mixed society, it is not asked, when he leaves it, whether he is rich or not. Lords and fiddlers, authors and common councilmen, editors of newspapers and parliamentary speakers meet together, and the difference is not so much marked as one would suppose. To be an Edinburgh Reviewer is, I suspect, the highest rank in modern literary society.

ESSAY XXXVI.

On Novelty and Familiarity

"*Horatio.* Custom hath rendered it no property of terrors."
Hamlet. "Use can almost change the stamp of nature, and master the devil or throw him out with wondrous potency."

Shakspeare represents his *Grave-digger* as singing while he is employed in his sexton's trade, and thinking the skulls cast out of the earth with the spade. On this he takes occasion to remark, that "custom has made it in him a property of easiness." To which the other is made to reply, as a distance, that those who have the least to do have the most leisure generally. The hands and brains of those who are employed by luxury and ease, and who have no hard work to encounter to wear out the fine edge of life, present a dull, unresisting surface to outward impressions, and are infected with a great degree of insensibility to pleasure and pain. Habit, in most cases, hardens and renders callous, by wearing away the too nice edge of our sensations: but is it not also that process which, by giving a mechanical facility, assists by original organization, enables ? Habit may be said to be mechanical, strength, and to consist entirely in deadening our sensibility, or to sharpen our active perceptions, and deaden our passive ones. Practice makes perfect—experience makes us wise. The one refers to what we have to do, the other to what we have to bear. I will endeavour to explain the distinction, and to give some examples in each case.

Circumstances which common persons have to encounter and overcome as trials, become the means of exercising and displaying superior talents, and of acquiring a habit of command over them. Thus, the business of a general, or statesman, is a task to the mind, which the mere labour of writing a book, or keeping accounts, would be to the body. Those works demanding great [illegible] are unable

nicety and discrimination of tact with practice and unremitted application. A working jeweller can perceive slight distinctions of surface, and make the smallest incisions in the hardest substances from mere practice: a woollen-draper perceives the different degrees of the fineness in cloth, on the same principle; a watch-maker will insert a great bony fist, and perform the nicest operations among the springs and wheels of a complicated and curious machinery, where the soft delicate hand of a woman or a child would make nothing but blunders. Again, a blind man shows a prodigious sagacity in hearing and almost *feeling* objects at a distance from him. His other senses acquire an almost preternatural quickness from the necessity of recurring to them oftener, and relying on them more implicitly, in consequence of the privation of sight. The musician distinguishes tones and notes, the painter expressions and colors, from constant habit and unwearied attention, that are quite lost upon the common observer. The critic discovers beauties in a poem, the poet features in nature, that are generally overlooked by those who have not employed their imaginations or understandings on these particular studies. Whatever art or science we devote ourselves to, we grow more perfect in with time and practice. The range of our perceptions is at once enlarged and refined. But—there lies the question that must "give us pause"—is the pleasure increased in proportion to our habitual and critical discernment, or does not our familiarity with nature, with science, and with art, breed an indifference for those objects we are most conversant with and most masters of? I am afraid the answer, if an honest one, must be on the unfavorable side; and that from the moment that we can be said to understand any subject thoroughly, or can execute any art skilfully, our pleasure in it will be found to be on the decline. No doubt, that with the opening of every new inlet of ideas, there is unfolded a new source of pleasure; but this does not last much longer than the first discovery we make of this *terra incognita;* and with the closing up of every avenue of novelty, of curiosity, and of mystery, there is an end also of our transport, our wonder, and our delight; or it is converted into a very sober, rational, and household sort of satisfaction.

There is a craving after information, as there is after food;

the part, has he the same pleasure in it as he had the first time? The wonder is how he can go through with it at all; nor could he, were he not supported by the plaudits of the audience, who seem like new friends to him, or urged on by the fear of disgrace to which no man is ever reconciled.

I will here take occasion to suggest what appears to me the true state of the question, whether a great actor is enabled to embody his part from feeling or from study. I think at the time from neither; but merely (or chiefly at least) from habit. But I think he must have felt the character in the first instance with all the enthusiasm of nature and genius, or he never would have distinguished himself in it. To say that the intellect alone can determine or supply the movements or the language of passion, is little short of a contradiction in terms. Substituting the head for the heart is like saying that the eye is a judge of sounds or the ear of colors. If a man in cold blood knows how another feels in a fit of passion, it is from having been in a passion himself before. Nor can the indifferent observation of the outward signs attain to the truth of nature, without the inward sympathy to impel us forward, and to tell us where to stop. Without that living criterion, we shall be either tame and mechanical, or turgid and extravagant. The study of individual models produces imitators and mannerists: the study of general principles produces pedants. It is feeling alone that makes up for the deficiencies of either mode of study; that expands the meagreness of the one, that unbends the rigidity of the other, that floats a man into the tide of popularity, and electrifies an audience. It is feeling, or it is hope and fear, joy and sorrow, love and hatred, that is the original source of the effects in nature which are brought forward on the stage; and assuredly it is a sympathy with this feeling, that must dictate the truest and most natural imitations of them. To suppose that a person altogether dead to these primary passions of the human breast can make a great actor, or feign the effects while he is entirely ignorant of the cause, is no less absurd than to suppose that I can describe a place which I never saw, or mimic a voice which I never heard, or speak a language which I never learnt. An actor void of genius and passion may be taught to strut about the stage, and mouth out his words with mock-solem-

is because in the extremity of his anguish, and in the full sense of his ghastly and desolate situation, he feels a want of something as a shield or covering to protect him from the weight that is ready to fall and crush him, and he makes use of that fine and impressive action for this purpose:—not that I suppose he is affected in this manner every time he repeats it, but he never would have thought of it but from having this deep and bewildering feeling of weight and oppression, which naturally suggested it to his imagination, and at the same time assured him that it was just. Feeling is in fact the scale that weighs the truth of all original conceptions. When Mrs. Siddons played the part of Mrs. Beverly in the Gamester, and on Stukely's abrupt declaration of his unprincipled passion at the moment of her husband's imprisonment, threw into her face that noble succession of varying emotions, first seeming not to understand him, then, as her doubt is removed, rising into sudden indignation, then turning to pity, and ending in a burst of hysteric scorn and laughter, was this the effect of stratagem or forethought as a painter arranges a number of colors on his palette? No—but by placing herself amply in the situation of her heroine, and entering into all the circumstances, and feeling the dignity of insulted virtue and misfortune, that wonderful display of keen and high-wrought expressions burst from her involuntarily at the same moment, and kindled her face almost into a blaze of lightning. Yet Mrs. Siddons is sometimes accused of being cold and insensible. I do not wonder that she may seem so after exertions such as these; as the Sybils of old after their inspired prophetic fury sank upon the ground, breathless and exhausted. But that any one can embody high thoughts and passions without having the prototypes in their own breast, is what I shall not believe upon hearsay, and what I am sure cannot be proved by argument.

It is a common complaint, that actors and actresses are dull when off the stage. I do not know that this is the case; but I own I should be surprised if it were otherwise. Many persons expect from the *éclat* with which they appear in certain characters to find them equally brilliant in company, not considering that the effect they produce in their artificial characters is the very circumstance that must disqualify them from producing any in

right to blubber like a school-boy whenever he pleases, who almost every night of his life makes hundreds of people laugh till they forget they are no longer school-boys. I hope, if this should prove a hard winter, he will again wrap himself up in flannel and *lamb's wool*, take to his fire-side, and read the English Novelists once more fairly through. Let him have these lying on his table, Hogarth's prints hung round the room, and with his own face to boot, I defy the world to match them again! There is something very amiable and praiseworthy in the friendships of the two ingenious actors I have just alluded to: from the example of contrast and disinterestedness it affords, it puts me in mind of that of Rosinante and Dapple. These Arcadian retirements and ornamented retreats are, I suspect, tantalizing and unsatisfactory resources to the favorites of the town. The constant fever of applause, and of anxiety to deserve it, which produces the wish for repose, disables them from enjoying it. Let the *calenture* be as strong as it will, the eye of the pit is upon them in the midst of it: the smile of the boxes, the roar of the gallery, pierces through their holly-hedges, and overthrows all their pastoral theories. Of the public as of the sex it may be said, when one has once been a candidate for their favors,

"There is no living with them, nor without them!"

I wish the late Mr. Kemble had not written that stupid book about Richard III. and closed a proud theatrical career with a piece of literary foppery. Yet why do I wish it if it pleased him, since it made no alteration in my opinion respecting him? Its dry details, its little tortuous struggles after contradiction, nay, its fulsome praises of a kindred critic, Mr. Gifford (what will not a retired tragedian do for a niche in the *Quarterly Review?*), did not blot from my memory his stately form, his noble features, in which old Rome saw herself revived, his manly sense and plaintive tones, that were an echo to deep-fraught sentiment; nor make me forget another volume of poems published and suppressed long before, a volume addressed to Mrs. Inchbald, "the silver-voiced Anna." Both are dead. Such is the stuff of which our lives are made—bubbles that reflect the glorious features of the universe, and that glance a passing shadow, a feeble gleam, on those around them!

Mrs. Siddons was in the meridian of her reputation when I first became acquainted with the stage. She was an established veteran when I was an unfledged novice; and perhaps played those scenes without emotion, which filled me and so many others with delight and awe. So far I had the advantage of her, and of myself too. I did not then analyse her excellences as I should now, [illegible] I was stunned and torpid after seeing her in any of her great parts. [illegible] a joy and felicity unutterable, that has since vanished in the mists [illegible]

our desires and fancies, which are most potent in their capacity to create good or evil. The first glow of passion in the breast throws its radiance over the opening path of life; and it is wonderful how much of the volume of our future existence the mere title-page discloses. The results do not indeed exactly correspond with our expectations; but our passions survive their first eager ebullition and bitter disappointment, the bulk of our sensations consists of broken vows and fading recollections; and it is not astonishing that there is so near a resemblance between our earliest anticipations and our latest sigh, since we obstinately believe things to be to the last, what we at first wished to find them.

"Hope travels through, nor quits us till we die."

Our existence is a tissue of passion, and our successive years only present us with fainter and fainter copies of the first proof-impressions. "The dregs of life," therefore, contain very little of force or spirit which

——"the first sprightly runnings could not give."

Imagination is, in this sense, sometimes truer than reality; for our passions being "compacted of imagination," and our desires whetted by impatience and delay, often lose some of their taste and essence with possession. So in youth we look forward to the advances of age, and feel them more strongly than when they arrive; nor is this more extraordinary than that from the height of a precipice the descent below should make us giddy, and that we should be less sensible of it when we come to the ground. Experience can teach us little, I suspect, after the first unfolding of our faculties, and the first strong excitement of outward objects. It can only add to or take away from our original impressions, and the imagination can make out the addition as largely or feel the privation as sharply as the senses. The little it can teach us, which is to moderate our chagrins and sober our expectations to the dull standard of reality, we will not learn. "Reason panders will;" and if we have been disappointed forty times, we are only the more resolved that the forty-first time shall make up for all the rest, and our hope grows desperate as the chances

are against it. A man who is wary, is so naturally; he who is of a sanguine and credulous disposition, will continue so, in spite of warning: we hearken to no voice but that of our secret [illegible] and native bias. Mr. Wordsworth being asked why he admired the scope of infancy, said he thought it [illegible] with [illegible] the reason of which is partly owing to the contrast of total unconsciousness to all the ills of life, and partly that it is [illegible] all the future good [illegible]. In the outset of life, all that is to come [illegible] prospect [illegible] force upon the heart, and our yearnings after good and dread of evil are in proportion to the little we have [illegible]. The first [illegible] of hope and fear in the human heart [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] we tire of [illegible] [illegible] sameness. The path of life [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] weal or woe.

[illegible] I have [illegible] with the [illegible] [illegible] I [illegible] Tristram Shandy, and Peregrine Pickle, and Tom Jones, and the Tatler, and Gil Blas of Santillane, and Werter, and Boccaccio. It was some years after that I read the last, but his tales

> "[illegible]
> [illegible]"

The story of Frederigo [illegible] affected me as [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] I saw a picture of [illegible] [illegible] as a [illegible]

at his own poor farm. I could wish that Lord Byron had employed himself while in Italy in rescuing such a writer as Boccacio from unmerited obloquy, instead of making those notable discoveries, that Pope was a poet, and that Shakspeare was not one! Mrs. Inchbald was always a great favorite with me. There is the true soul of woman breathing from what she writes, as much as if you heard her voice. It is as if Venus had written books. I first read her *Simple Story* (of all places in the world) at M———. No matter where it was; for it transported me out of myself. I recollect walking out to escape from one of the tenderest parts, in order to return to it again with double relish. An old crazy hand-organ was playing Robin Adair, a summer-shower dropped manna on my head, and slaked my feverish thirst of happiness. Her heroine, Miss Milner, was at my side. My dream has since been verified:—how like it was to the reality! In truth, the reality itself was but a dream. Do I not still see that "simple movement of her finger" with which Madame Basil beckoned Jean Jacques to the seat at her feet, the heightened color that tinged her profile as she sat at her work netting, the bunch of flowers in her hair? Is not the glow of youth and beauty in her cheek blended with the blushes of the roses in her hair? Do they not breathe the breath of love? And (what though the adventure was unfinished by either writer or reader) is not the blank filled up with the rare and subtle spirit of fancy, that imparts the fullness of delight to the air-drawn creations of brain? I once sat on a sunny bank in a field in which the green blades of corn waved in the fitful northern breeze, and read the letter in the *New Eloise*, in which St. Preux describes the Pays de Vaud. I never felt what Shakspeare calls my "glassy essence," so much as then. My thoughts were pure and free. They took a tone from the objects before me, and from the simple manners of the inhabitants of mountain-scenery, so well described in the letter. The style gave me the same sensation as the drops of morning dew before they are scorched by the sun; and I thought Julia did well to praise it. I wished I could have written such a letter. That wish, enhanced by my admiration of genius and the feeling of the objects around me, was accompanied with more pleasure than if I had written fifty such letters, or had gained all

the reputation of its immortal author! Of all the pictures, prints, or drawings I ever saw, none ever gave me such satisfaction as the rude etchings at the top of Rousseau's *Confessions*. There is a necromantic spell in the outlines. Imagination is a witch. It is not even said anywhere that such is the case, but I had got it into my head that the rude sketches of old thatched houses, and stumps of trees, represented the scenes at Annecy and Vevey, where he who relished all more sharply than others, and by his own intense aspirations after good had almost redeemed mankind from the yoke of evil, first drew the breath of hope. Here love's golden rigol bound his brows, and here fell from it. It was the partition-wall between life and death to him, and all beyond it was a desert! . . . .

"[illegible]"

[illegible] a paltry [illegible] tears and [illegible] Because I [illegible]

Mr. [illegible]

shifts of his invention. There is a great deal of truth in this view of the matter. *Poeta nascitur, non fit;* that is, it is the strong character and impulse of the mind that forces out its way and stamps itself upon outward objects, not that is elicited and laboriously raised into artificial importance by contrivance and study. An *improving* actor, artist, or poet never becomes a great one. I have known such in my time, who were always advancing by slow and sure steps to the height of their profession; but in the mean time, some man of genius rose, and passing them, at once seized on the topmost round of ambition's ladder, so that they still remained in the second class. A volcano does not give warning when it will break out, nor a thunder-bolt send word of its approach. Mr. Kean stamped himself the first night in Shylock; he never did any better. Mr. Kemble is the only great and truly impressive actor I remember, who rose to his stately height by the interposition of art and gradations of merit. A man of genius is *sui generis*—to be known, he need only to be seen—you can no more dispute whether he is one, than you can dispute whether it is a panther that is shown you in a cage. Mrs. Siddons did not succeed the first time she appeared on the London boards, but then it was in Garrick's time, who sent her back to the country. He startled and put her out in some part she had to play with him, by the amazing vividness and intrepidity of his style of acting. Yet old Dr. Chauncey who frequented Sir Joshua Reynolds's, said that he was not himself in his latter days, that he got to play harlequin's tricks, and was too much in the trammels of the stage, and was quite different from what he was when he came out at Goodman's-Fields, when he surprised the town in Richard, as if he had dropped from the clouds, and his acting was all fire and air. Mrs. Siddons was hardly satisfied with the admiration of those who had only seen her latter performances, which were distinguished chiefly by their towering height and marble outline. She has been heard to exclaim, "You have seen me only in Lady Macbeth and Queen Katherine, and Belvidera and Jane Shore—you should have seen me when I played these characters alternately with Juliet, and Desdemona, and Calista, and the Mourning Bride, night after night, when I first came from Bath!" If she indeed filled these parts with a

beauty and tenderness equal to the sublimity of her other performances, we had only to see her in them and die! Lord Byron says, that Lady Macbeth died when Mrs. Siddons left the stage. Could not even her acting help him to understand Shakspeare?—Sir Joshua Reynolds at a late period saw some picture that he had done in early life, and lamented the little progress he had made. Yet he belonged to the latest and greatest of the old masters. No one generation improves much upon another: no one individual improves much upon himself. What we impart to others we have within us, and we have it already from the first. The highest insight we obtain into nature is that which we receive from the broad light thrown upon it by the sudden development of our own faculties and feelings.

Even in science the greatest discoveries have been made at an early age. Sir Isaac Newton was not twenty when he saw the apple fall. Harvey, I believe, discovered the circulation of the blood at thirty. Berkeley was only twenty-four when he published his Essay on Vision. Hartley's great work was developed in an inaugural dissertation at College. Hume wrote his Treatise on Human Nature while he was yet quite a young man. Hobbes put forth his metaphysical system very soon after he had entered the service of Lord Bacon. I believe also that Galileo, Leibnitz, and Euler commenced their career of discovery quite young; and I think it is only then, before the mind becomes set in certain habits of the distinctness of ideas that it can have vivid perception of the truth of particulars and sufficient boldness to conceive of universals. In exploring new and untried tracts of speculation, the most distinct and well-grounded views are as drops of water lost sight of at first in the ocean, but afterwards following its own course. The very originality of the mind in its first perceptions and staggering under the sense of, forces together extreme statements and contradictions which would never occur to it at a more advanced stage of knowledge, and by dint of its struggles to reconcile opposites, or to explain away the extremes on the one side or the other, we can trace the whole process by which we have made up our minds. It is a common and only excuse for the prevalence of prejudice that Sir [illegible] number of opinions we have formed we are less capable of [illegible]

ing new ones, and slide into common-places, according as we have them at hand to resort to. It is easier taking the beaten path than making our way over bogs and precipices. The great difficulty in philosophy is to come to every question with a mind fresh and unshackled by former theories, though strengthened by exercise and information; as in the practice of art, the great thing is to retain our admiration of the beautiful in nature, together with the power to imitate it, and not, from a want of this original feeling, to be enslaved by formal rules, or dazzled by the mere difficulties of execution. Habit is necessary to give power: but with the stimulus of novelty, the love of truth and nature ceases through indolence or insensibility. Hence wisdom too commonly degenerates into prejudice; and skill into pedantry. Ask a metaphysician what subject he understands best; and he will tell you that which he knows the least about. Ask a musician to play a favorite tune, and he will select an air the most difficult of execution. If you ask an artist his opinion of a picture, he will point to some defect in perspective or anatomy. If an opera-dancer wishes to impress you with an idea of his grace and accomplishments, he will throw himself into the most distorted attitude possible. Who would not rather see a dance in the forest of Montmorenci on a summer's evening by a hundred laughing peasant-girls and their partners, who come to this scene for several miles round, rushing through the forest-glades, as the hart panteth for the water-brooks, than all the *pirouettes*, *pied-à-plombs*, and *entrechats*, performed at the French Opera by the whole *corps de ballet?* Yet the first only just contrive to exert their heels, and not put their partners out, whilst the last perform nothing but feats of dexterity and miracles of skill—not one of which they could ever have performed, if they had not lost every idea of natural grace, ease, or decorum in habitual callousness or professional vanity, or had one feeling left which prompts their rustic rivals to run through the mazes of the dance

"With heedless haste and giddy cunning,"

while the leaves tremble to the festive sounds of music, and the air circles in gladder currents to their joyous movements!—There was a dance in the pantomime at Covent-Garden two years

ago, which I could have gone to see every night. I did go to see it every night that I could make an excuse for that purpose. It was nothing; it was childish. Yet I could not keep away from it. Some young people came out of a large twelfth-cake, dressed in full court costume, and danced a quadrille, and then a minuet, to some divine air. Was it that it put me in mind of my school-boy days, and of the large bunch of lilac that I used to send as a present to my partner? Or of times still longer past, the court of Louis XIV., the Duke de Nemours and the Princess of Cleves? Or of the time when she who was all grace moved in measured steps before me, and wafted me into Elysium? I know not how it was; but it came over the sense with a power not to be resisted,

"Like the sweet south
That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odour."

I mention these things to [illegible] that pleasures are not

"Like [illegible],
Y[illegible],
Or [illegible],
A[illegible];
O[illegible],
T[illegible];
O[illegible],
I[illegible]."

On the contrary, I think they leave traces of themselves behind them durable and [illegible] proportion to the [illegible] and which we [illegible]. The [illegible] perhaps those which [illegible] well.

The Opera [illegible] pleasant [illegible] that dance [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

He who undertakes to master any art or science has cut himself out work enough to last the rest of his life, and may promise himself all the enjoyment that is to be found in looking down with self-complacent triumph on the inferiority of others, or all the torment that there is in envying their success. There is no danger that the machine will ever stand still afterwards. Mandeville has endeavored to show that if it were not for envy, malice, and all uncharitableness, mankind would perish of pure chagrin and *ennui;* and I am not in the humor to contradict him.—The same spirit of emulation that urges us on to surpass others, supplies us with a new source of satisfaction (of something which is at least the reverse of indifference and apathy) in the indefatigable exertion of our faculties and the perception of new and minor shades of distinction. These, if not so delightful, are more subtle, and may be multiplied indefinitely. They borrow something of taste and pleasure from their first origin, till they dwindle away into mere abstractions. The exercise, whether of our minds or bodies, sharpens and gives additional alacrity to our active impressions as the indulgence of our sensibility, whether to pleasure or pain, blunts our passive ones. The will to do, the power to think, is a progressive faculty, though not the capacity to feel. Otherwise, the business of life could not go on. If it were necessity alone that oiled the springs of society, people would grow tired and restive, they would lie down and die. But with use there comes a habit, a positive need of something to keep off the horror of vacancy. The sense of power has a sense of pleasure annexed to it, or what is practically tantamount, an impulse, an endeavor, that carries us through the most tiresome drudgery or the hardest tasks. Indolence is a part of our nature too. There is a *vis inertiæ* at first, a difficulty in beginning or in leaving off. I have spun out this Essay in a good measure from the dread I feel of entering upon new subjects.—Some such reasoning is necessary to account for the headstrong and incorrigible violence of the passions when the will is once implicated. So in ambition, in avarice, in the love of gaming and of drinking (where the strong stimulus is the chief excitement), there is no hope of any termination, of any pause or relaxation; but we are hurried forward as by a fever, when all sense of pleasure is dead, and we only

persevere as it were out of contradiction, and in defiance of the obstacles, the mortifications and privations we have to encounter. The resistance of the will to outward circumstances, its determination to create its own good or evil, is also a part of the same constitution of the mind. The solitary captive can make a companion of the spider that straggles into his cell, or find amusement in counting the nails in his dungeon-door; while the proud lord that placed him there feels the depth of solitude in crowded ball-rooms and hot theatres, and turns with weariness from the scenes of luxury and dissipation. Defoe's romance is the finest possible exemplification of the manner in which our internal resources increase with our external wants.

Our affections are enlarged and fortified with time and acquaintance. If we like new books, new faces, new scenes, or *hanker* after those we have never seen, we also like old books, old faces, old haunts,

> "Round which, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
> Our pastime and our happiness have grown."

If we are repelled after a while by familiarity, or when the first gloss of novelty wears off, we are brought back from time to time by recurring recollections, and are at last wedded to them by a thousand ties. Passion, the undue irritation of the will from indulgence [illegible] the attachment we form to any object [illegible] with the habitual impression of numberless [illegible] and ratifications of pleasure. The heart is the most central of all things. Our [illegible] affections [illegible] our understandings are [illegible] and must [illegible]. If this is [illegible] at the end. The [illegible] sense of [illegible] durability.

Our [illegible] as they [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] with them. [illegible] We [illegible] [illegible] ing than [illegible] with [illegible]. Our [illegible]

spread out over a larger surface, are variable for that very reason, that they tire by repetition, and are diminished in comparison.* Our physical ones have but one condition for their duration and sincerity, *viz.* that they shall be unforced and natural. Our passions of a grosser kind wear out before our senses; but in ordinary cases they grow indolent and conform to habit, instead of becoming impatient or inordinate from a desire of change, as we are satisfied with more moderate bodily exercise in age or middle life than we are in youth. Upon the whole, there are many things to prop up and reinforce our fondness for existence, after the intoxication of our first acquaintance with it is over; health, a walk and the appetite it creates, a book, the doing a good-natured or friendly action, are satisfactions that hold out to the last; and with these, and any others to aid us that fall harmlessly in our way, we may make a shift for a few seasons, after having exhausted the short-lived transports of an eager and enthusiastic imagination, and without being under the necessity of hanging or drowning ourselves as soon as we come to years of discretion.

* I remember Mr. Wordsworth saying, that he thought we had pleasanter days in the outset of life, but that our years slid on pretty even one with another, as we gained in variety and richness what we lost in intensity. This balance of pleasure can however only be hoped for by those who retain the best feelings of their early youth, and sometimes deign to look out of their own minds into those of others: for without this we shall grow weary of the continual contemplation of self, particularly as that self will be a very shabby one.

LECTURES

ON THE

AGE OF ELIZABETH.

AS A TRIBUTE

AND A

IN

BASIL MONTAGU.

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ADVERTISEMENT TO THE LAST LONDON EDITION,

BY THE AUTHOR'S SON.

The former editions of the Lectures, originally delivered by the author at the Surrey Institution in 1818, and published in the same year, having become exhausted, the present reprint has been undertaken for the purpose of supplying the constant and increasing demand which is made for it.

There is no feature in the retrospect of the last few years, more important and more delightful than the steady advance of an improved taste in literature: and both as a cause and as a consequence of this, the works of William Hazlitt, which heretofore have been duly appreciated only by the few, are now having ample justice done to them by the many. With reference to the present work, the Edinburgh Review very properly observes, "Mr. Hazlitt possesses one rare quality at least for the office which he has chosen, in the intensity of his love which he feels for the great authors on whose excellences he chiefly dwells. His zeal for their beauties is so keen, that while he discusses them, the pleasures which they impart become almost palpable to the senses, and we seem scarcely to read, but to hear and see the speaker's words." He introduces us familiarly into the very presence of the great poets whom we read, hear the harmonies of their lyres, and listen to their words, and make us partakers in the joy of those days when they were inspired, or of the woe which they felt in the hour of their trials. He draws aside the veil of time with a hand trembling with

mingled delight and reverence; and descants with kindling enthusiasm, on all the delicacies of that picture of genius which he discloses. His intense admiration of intellectual beauty seems always to sharpen his critical faculties. He perceives it, by a kind of intuitive power, how deeply soever it may be buried in rubbish; and separates it in a moment from all that would encumber or deface it. At the same time, he exhibits to us those hidden sources of beauty, not like an anatomist, but like a lover. He does not coolly dissect the form to show the springs whence the blood flows all eloquent, and the divine expression is kindled; but makes us feel in the sparkling or softened eye, the wreathed smile, and the tender bloom. In a word, he at once analyzes and describes—so that our enjoyments of loveliness are not chilled, but brightened by our acquaintance with their inward sources. The knowledge communicated in his lectures breaks no sweet enchantment, nor chills one feeling of youthful joy. His criticisms, while they extend our insight into the causes of poetical excellence, teach us, at the same time, more keenly to enjoy, and more fondly to revere it."

LECTURES

ON THE

AGE OF ELIZABETH, &c.

LECTURE I.—INTRODUCTORY.

General View of the Subject.

The age of Elizabeth was distinguished, beyond, perhaps, any other in our history, by a number of great men, famous in different ways, and whose names have come down with unfading honours; statesmen, warriors, divines, scholars, poets, and philosophers, Raleigh, Drake, Cecil, Hooker, and higher and more sounding still, and still more frequent on our mouths, Shakspeare, Spenser, Sidney, Bacon, Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, men whose fame has enrolled in her long and lasting scroll, and who by their words and acts were benefactors of their country, and ornaments of human nature. Their attainments of different kinds bore the same general stamp, and was sterling: what they did had the mark of originality and energy in it. Perhaps the genius of Great Britain (if I may so speak without offence or flattery) never shone out fuller or brighter, or looked more like [illegible] at this period. Our writers and great men had something in them that savoured of the soil from which they grew: they were not Platonic, they were not Dutch or German, or Greek or Latin; they were truly English. They [illegible] called themselves to see what they already [illegible] with and talents, and [illegible] in their own [illegible] and [illegible] they were [illegible] also [illegible] to the [illegible] face of nature, with [illegible] with more but

natural grace, and heartfelt, unobtrusive delicacy. They were not at all sophisticated. The mind of their country was great in them, and it prevailed. With their learning and unexampled acquirement they did not forget that they were men: with all their endeavours after excellence, they did not lay aside the strong original bent and character of their minds. What they performed was chiefly nature's handiwork; and time has claimed it for his own.—To these, however, might be added others not less learned, nor with a scarce less happy vein, but less fortunate in the event, who, though as renowned in their day, have sunk into "mere oblivion," and of whom the only record (but that the noblest) is to be found in their works. Their works and their names, "poor, poor, dumb names," are all that remains of such men as Webster, Decker, Marston, Marlowe, Chapman, Heywood, Middleton, and Rowley! "How lov'd, how honour'd once avails them not:" though they were the friends and fellow-labourers of Shakspeare, sharing his fame and fortunes with him, the rivals of Jonson, and the masters of Beaumont and Fletcher's well-sung woes! They went out one by one unnoticed, like evening lights; or were swallowed up in the headlong torrent of puritanic zeal which succeeded, and swept away everything in its unsparing course, throwing up the wrecks of taste and genius at random, and at long fitful intervals, amidst the painted gewgaws and foreign frippery of the reign of Charles II., and from which we are only now recovering the scattered fragments and broken images to erect a temple to true Fame! How long before it will be completed?

If I can do anything to rescue some of these writers from hopeless obscurity, and to do them right, without prejudice to well deserved reputation, I shall have succeeded in what I chiefly propose. I shall not attempt, indeed, to adjust the spelling, or restore the pointing, as if the genius of poetry lay hid in errors of the press, but leaving these weightier matters of criticism to those who are more able and willing to bear the burden, try to bring out their real beauties to the eager sight, "draw the curtain of Time, and show the picture of Genius," restraining my own admiration within reasonable bounds.

There is not a lower ambition, a poorer way of thought, than

that which would confine all excellence, or arrogate its final accomplishment to the present, or modern times. We ordinarily speak and think of those who had the misfortune to write or live before us, as labouring under very singular privations and disadvantages in not having the benefit of those improvements which we have made, as buried in the grossest ignorance, or the slaves "of poring pedantry;" and we make a cheap and infallible estimate of their progress in civilization upon a graduated scale of perfectibility, calculated from the meridian of our own times. If we have pretty well got rid of the narrow bigotry that would limit all sense or virtue to our own country, and have fraternized, like true cosmopolites, with our neighbours and contemporaries, we have made our self-love amends by letting the generation we live in engross nearly all our admiration, and by pronouncing a sweeping sentence of barbarism and ignorance on our ancestry backwards, from the commencement (as near as can be) of the nineteenth, or the latter end of the eighteenth century. From thence we date a new era, the dawn of our own intellect, and that of the world, like "the sacred influence of light" glimmering on the confines of "Chaos and old night;" new manners rise, and all the cumbrous "pomp of elder days" vanishes, and is lost in worse than Gothic darkness. Pavilioned in the glittering pride of our superficial accomplishments and upstart pretensions, we fancy that every thing beyond that magic circle is prejudice and error; and all, before the present enlightened period, but a dull and useless blank in the great map of time. We are so dazzled with the gloss and novelty of modern discoveries, that we cannot take into our mind's eye the vast expanse, the lengthened perspective of human intellect, and a cloud hangs over and conceals its loftiest monuments, if they are removed to a little distance from us—the cloud of our own vanity and short-sightedness. The modern sciolist stultifies all understanding but his own, and that which he conceives like his own. We think, in this age of reason and consummation of philosophy, because we knew nothing twenty or thirty years ago, and began then to think for the first time in our lives, that the rest of mankind were in the same predicament, and never knew any thing till we did; that the world had grown old in sloth and ignorance, had dreamt out its lon

minority of five thousand years in a dozing state, and that it first began to wake out of sleep, to rouse itself, and look about it, startled by the light of our unexpected discoveries, and the noise we made about them. Strange error of our infatuated self-love. Because the clothes we remember to have seen worn when we were children are now out of fashion, and our grandmothers were then old women, we conceive, with magnanimous continuity of reasoning, that it must have been much worse three hundred years before, and that grace, youth, and beauty are things of modern date—as if nature had ever been old, or the sun had first shone on our folly and presumption. Because, in a word, the last generation, when tottering off the stage, were not so active, so sprightly, and so promising as we were, we begin to imagine that people formerly must have crawled about in a feeble, torpid state, like flies in winter, in a sort of dim twilight of the understanding; "nor can we think what thoughts they could conceive," in the absence of all those topics that so agreeably enliven and diversify our conversation and literature, mistaking the imperfection of our knowledge for the defect of their organs, as if it was necessary for us to have a register and certificate of their thoughts, or as if, because they did not see with our eyes, hear with our ears, and understand with our understandings, they could hear, see, and understand nothing. A falser inference could not be drawn, nor one more contrary to the maxims and cautions of a wise humanity. "Think," says Shakspeare, the prompter of good and true feelings, "there's livers out of Britain." So there have been thinkers, and great and sound ones, before our time. They had the same capacities that we have, sometimes greater motives for their exertion, and for the most part, the same subject-matter to work upon. What we learn from nature, we may hope to do as well as they; what we learn from them we may in general expect to do worse.—What is, I think, as likely as anything to cure us of this overweening admiration of the present, and unmingled contempt for past times, is the looking at the finest old pictures; at Raphael's heads, at Titian's faces, at Claude's landscapes. We have there the evidence of the senses, without the alterations of opinion or disguise of language. We there see the blood circulate through the veins (long before it was known that

it did so), the same red and white "by Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on," the same tender accents passing through the mouth and seated on the lips, the same [illegible] sunny vales, "where Pan, knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance, leads on the eternal spring." And we begin to feel that nature and the mind of man are not a thing of yesterday, as we had been led to suppose; and that "there are more things between heaven and earth than were ever dreamt of in our philosophy."—Or grant that we improve, in some respects, in a uniformly progressive ratio, and build, Babel-high, on the foundation of other men's knowledge, as in matters of science and speculative inquiry, where, by going often over the same general ground, certain general conclusions have been arrived at, and in the number of persons reasoning on a given subject, truth has at last been hit upon, and long-established error exploded; yet this does not apply to cases of individual power and knowledge, to a million of things beside, in which we are still to seek as much as ever, and in which we can only hope to find, by going to the fountain-head of thought and experience. We are quite wrong in supposing (as we are apt to do), that we can plead an exclusive title to wit and wisdom, to taste and genius, as the net produce and clear reversion of the age we live in, and that all we have to do to be great is to despise those who have gone before us as nothing.

Or even if we admit a saving clause in this sweeping proscription, and do not make the rule absolute, the very nature of the exceptions shows the spirit in which they are made. We single out one or two striking instances, say Shakespeare or Lord Bacon, which we would fain treat as prodigies, and as a marked contrast to the rudeness and barbarism that surrounded them. These we delight to dwell upon and magnify; the praise and wonder we heap upon their shrines are at the expense of the time in which they lived, and would leave it naked of [illegible]. We think [illegible] [illegible] what we w[illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] set up. Instead of [illegible] credit to the period of history [illegible]

we only make use of their example to insult and degrade it still more beneath our own level.

It is the present fashion to speak with veneration of old English literature; but the homage we pay to it is more akin to the rites of superstition than to the worship of true religion. Our faith is doubtful; our love cold; our knowledge little or none. We now and then repeat the names of some of the old writers by rote, but we are shy of looking into their works. Though we seem disposed to think highly of them, and to give them every credit for a masculine and original vein of thought, as a matter of literary courtesy and enlargement of taste, we are afraid of coming to the proof, as too great a trial of our candour and patience. We regard the enthusiastic admiration of these obsolete authors, or a desire to make proselytes to a belief in their extraordinary merits, as an amiable weakness, a pleasing delusion; and prepare to listen to some favourite passage, that may be referred to in support of this singular taste, with an incredulous smile; and are in no small pain for the result of the hazardous experiment; feeling much the same awkward condescending disposition to patronize these first crude attempts at poetry and lispings of the Muse, as when a fond parent brings forward a bashful child to make a display of its wit or learning. We hope the best, put a good face on the matter, but are sadly afraid the thing cannot answer.—Dr. Johnson said of these writers generally, that "they were sought after because they were scarce, and would not have been scarce had they been much esteemed." His decision is neither true history nor sound criticism. They were esteemed, and they deserved to be so.

One cause that might be pointed out here, as having contributed to the long-continued neglect of our earlier writers, lies in the very nature of our academic institutions, which unavoidably neutralizes a taste for the productions of native genius, estranges the mind from the history of our own literature, and makes it in each successive age like a book sealed. The Greek and Roman classics are a sort of privileged text-books, the standing order of the day, in a University education, and leave little leisure for a competent acquaintance with, or due admiration of, a whole host of able writers of our own, who are suffered to

species. His age was necessary to him; nor could he have been wrenched from his place in the edifice of which he was so conspicuous a part, without equal injury to himself and it. Mr. Wordsworth says of Milton, that "his soul was like a star, and dwelt apart." This cannot be said with any propriety of Shakspeare, who certainly moved in a constellation of bright luminaries, and "drew after him a third part of the heavens." If we allow, for argument's sake (or for truth's, which is better), that he was in himself equal to all his competitors put together; yet there was more dramatic excellence in that age than in the whole of the period that has elapsed since. If his contemporaries, with their united strength, would hardly make one Shakspeare, certain it is that all his successors would not make half a one. With the exception of a single writer, Otway, and of a single play of his ('Venice Preserved'), there is nobody in tragedy and dramatic poetry (I do not here speak of comedy), to be compared to the great men of the age of Shakspeare, and immediately after. They are a mighty phalanx of kindred spirits closing him round, moving in the same orbit, and impelled by the same causes in their whirling and eccentric career. They had the same faults and the same excellences; the same strength, and depth, and richness, the same truth of character, passion, imagination, thought and language, thrown, heaped, massed together without careful polishing or exact method, but poured out in unconcerned profusion from the lap of nature and genius in boundless and unrivalled magnificence. The sweetness of Decker, the thought of Marston, the gravity of Chapman, the grace of Fletcher and his young-eyed wit, Jonson's learned sock, the flowing vein of Middleton, Heywood's ease, the pathos of Webster, and Marlowe's deep designs, add a double lustre to the sweetness, thought, gravity, grace, wit, artless nature, copiousness, ease, pathos, and sublime conceptions of Shakspeare's Muse. They are indeed the scale by which we can best ascend to the true knowledge and love of him. Our admiration of them does not lessen our relish for him: but, on the contrary, increases and confirms it. For such an extraordinary combination and development of fancy and genius many causes may be assigned, and we seek for the chief of them in religion, in politics, in the

circumstances of the time, the recent diffusion of general knowledge, and in the character of the men who were most prominent and availed themselves so largely of the advantages placed within their reach.

I shall now attempt to give a general sketch of these causes, and of the manner in which they operated to produce that change in the policy of the country at the period of which I have spoken; an important change, of most beneficial and extensive consequences, for which there is no analogy, but which, after all, may often be the greatest difficulty in determining the most important results.

The first cause I shall mention, as contributing to this general effect, was the Reformation, which had then taken its rise. This event gave a mighty impulse, and increased activity to thought and inquiry, and agitated the inert mass of accumulated prejudice in the mind of Europe. The effect of this movement was various, according to circumstances in each country. It stopped, in some countries, the progress of improvement for a time; heaved the ground from under the feet of bigoted faith and slavish obedience; and left a fear and distrust of opinions, instead of that reverence and implicit belief which had before existed. In every country, it has never yet subsided. Germany first broke the spell of implicit belief, and gave the watchword; but England, France, and Scotland soon took it up, and carried it forward with more or less success. In some countries, it has been mixed with political views, and has produced a violent struggle. In others, it has been confined to the mind, and has produced a silent progress. In some countries, it has been checked and overthrown. Many countries have not yet felt its influence; but the spirit of the age is against them, and they must yield. There is no country in which the Reformation has been established, where it has not produced a great change in the character of the people, and in the state of knowledge and opinion. In Scotland, it has been the great

work. It threw open, by a secret spring, the rich treasures of religion and morality, which had been there locked up as in a shrine. It revealed the visions of the prophets, and conveyed the lessons of inspired teachers (such they were thought) to the meanest of the people. It gave them a common interest in the common cause. Their hearts burnt within them as they read. It gave a *mind* to the people, by giving them common subjects of thought and feeling. It cemented their union of character and sentiment: it created endless diversity and collision of opinion. They found objects to employ their faculties, and a motive in the magnitude of the consequences attached to them, to exert the utmost eagerness in the pursuit of truth, and the most daring intrepidity in maintaining it. Religious controversy sharpens the understanding by the subtlety and remoteness of the topics it discusses, and braces the will by their infinite importance. We perceive in the history of this period a nervous masculine intellect. No levity, no feebleness, no indifference; or if there were, it is a relaxation from the intense activity which gives a tone to its general character. But there is a gravity approaching to piety a seriousness of impression, a conscientious severity of argument, an habitual fervour and enthusiasm in their mode of handling almost every subject. The debates of the schoolmen were sharp and subtle enough; but they wanted interest and grandeur, and were, besides, confined to a few: they did not affect the general mass of the community. But the Bible was thrown open to all ranks and conditions "to run and read," with its wonderful table of contents from Genesis to the Revelations. Every village in England would present the scene so well described in Burns's Cotter's Saturday Night. I cannot think that all this variety and weight of knowledge could be thrown in all at once upon the mind of a people, and not make some impression upon it, the traces of which might be discerned in the manners and literature of the age. For, to leave more disputable points, and take only the historical parts of the Old Testament, or the moral sentiments of the New, there is nothing like them in the power of exciting awe and admiration, or of rivetting sympathy. We see what Milton has made of the account of the Creation, from the manner in which he has treated it, imbued and impregnated

with the spirit of the time of which we speak. Or what is there equal (in that romantic interest and patriarchal simplicity which goes to the heart of a country, and rouses it, as it were, from its lair in wastes and wildernesses) to the story of Joseph and his Brethren, of Rachael and Laban, of Jacob's Dream, of Ruth and Boaz, the descriptions in the book of Job, the deliverance of the Jews out of Egypt, or the account of their captivity and return from Babylon? There is in all these parts of the Scripture, and numberless more of the same kind, to pass over the Orphic hymns of David, the prophetic denunciations of Isaiah, or the gorgeous visions of Ezekiel, an originality, a vastness of conception, a depth and tenderness of feeling, and a touching simplicity in the mode of narration, which he who does not feel must be made of no "penetrable stuff." There is something in the character of Christ too (leaving religious faith quite out of the question) of more sweetness and majesty, and more likely to work a change in the mind of man, by the contemplation of its idea alone, than any to be found in history, whether actual or feigned. This character is that of a sublime humanity, such as was never seen on earth before nor since. This shone manifestly both in his words and actions. We see it in his washing the disciples' feet the night before his death, that unspeakable instance of humility and love, "above all art, all meanness, and all pride;" and in the leave he took of them on that occasion, "My peace I give unto you; that peace which the world cannot give, give I unto you;" and in his last commandment, that "they should love one another." Who can read the account of his behaviour on the cross, when turning to his mother he said, "Woman, behold thy son," and to the disciple John, "Behold thy mother," and "from that hour that disciple took her to his own home," without having his heart smote within him? We see it in his treatment of the woman taken in adultery, and in his excuse for the woman who poured precious ointment on his head, as an offering of devotion and love, which is here all in all. His religion was the religion of the heart. We see it in his discourse with the disciples as they walked together towards Emmaus, when their hearts burned within them; in his sermon from the Mount, in his parable of the good Samaritan, and in that of the Prodigal Son—in

every act and word of his life, a grace, a mildness, a dignity of love, a patience and wisdom worthy of the Son of God. His whole life and being were imbued, steeped in this word, *charity;* it was the spring, the well-head from which every thought and feeling gushed into act; and it was this that breathed a mild glory from his face in that last agony upon the cross, "when the meek Saviour bowed his head and died," praying for his enemies. He was the first true teacher of morality; for he alone conceived the idea of a pure humanity. He redeemed man from the worship of that idol, self, and instructed him by precept and example to love his neighbour as himself, to forgive our enemies, to do good to those that curse us and despitefully use us. He taught the love of good for the sake of good, without regard to personal or sinister views, and made the affections of the heart the sole seat of morality, instead of the pride of the understanding or the sternness of the will. In answering the question, "who is our neighbour?" as one who stands in need of our assistance, and whose wounds we can bind up, he has done more to humanize the thoughts and tame the unruly passions, than all who have tried to reform and benefit mankind. The very idea of abstract benevolence, of the desire to do good because another wants our services, and of regarding the human race as one family, the offspring of one common parent, is hardly to be found in any other code or system. It was "to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness." The Greeks and Romans never thought of considering others, but as they were Greeks or Romans, as they were bound to them by certain positive ties, or, on the other hand, as separated from them by fiercer antipathies. Their virtues were the virtues of political machines, their vices were the vices of demons, ready to inflict or endure pain with obdurate and remorseless inflexibility of purpose. But in the Christian religion, "we perceive a softness coming over the heart of a nation, and the iron scales that fence and harden it, melt and drop off." It becomes malleable, capable of pity, of forgiveness, of relaxing in its claims, and remitting its power. We strike it, and it does not hurt us: it is not steel or marble, but flesh and blood, clay tempered with tears, and "soft as sinews of the new-born babe." The gospel

was first preached to the poor, for it consulted their wants and interests, not its own pride and arrogance. It first promulgated the equality of mankind in the community of duties and benefits. It denounced the iniquities of the chief priests and pharisees, and declared itself at variance with principalities and powers, and sympathises not with the oppressor, but the oppressed. It first abolished slavery, for it did not consider the power of the will to inflict injury, as clothing it with a right to do so. Its law is good, not power. It at the same time tended to wean the mind from the grossness of sense, and a particle of its divine flame was lent to brighten and purify the lamp of love!

There have been persons who, being sceptics as to the divine mission of Christ, have taken an unaccountable prejudice to his doctrines, and have been disposed to deny the merit of his character; but this was not the feeling of the great men in the age of Elizabeth (whatever might be their belief), one of whom says of him, with a boldness equal to its piety:

> "The best of men
> That e'er wore earth about him, was a sufferer;
> A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit;
> The first true gentleman that ever breath'd."

This was old honest Dekker, and the lines ought to embalm his memory to every one who has a sense either of religion, or philosophy, or humanity, or true genius. Nor can I help thinking, that we may [illegible] *

The literature of this age, then, I would say, was strongly influenced (among other causes,) first by the spirit of Christianity, and secondly, by the spirit of Protestantism.

The effects of the Reformation on politics and philosophy [illegible]

* [illegible] of the [illegible] written [illegible]

be seen in the writings and history of the next and of the following ages. They are still at work, and will continue to be so. The effects on the poetry of the time were chiefly confined to the moulding of the character, and giving a powerful impulse to the intellect of the country. The immediate use or application that was made of religion to subjects of imagination and fiction was not (from an obvious ground of separation) so direct or frequent, as that which was made of the classical and romantic literature.

For, much about the same time, the rich and fascinating stores of the Greek and Roman mythology, and those of the romantic poetry of Spain and Italy, were eagerly explored by the curious, and thrown open in translations to the admiring gaze of the vulgar. This last circumstance could hardly have afforded so much advantage to the poets of that day, who were themselves, in fact, the translators, as it shows the general curiosity and increasing interest in such subjects, as a prevailing feature of the times. There were translations of Tasso by Fairfax, and of Ariosto by Harrington, of Homer and Hesiod by Chapman, and of Virgil long before, and Ovid soon after; there was Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch, of which Shakspeare has made such admirable use in his Coriolanus and Julius Cæsar; and Ben Jonson's tragedies of Catiline and Sejanus may themselves be considered as almost literal translations into verse, of Tacitus, Sallust, and Cicero's Orations in his consulship. Boccacio, the divine Boccacio, Petrarch, Dante, the satirist Aretine, Machiavel, Castiglione, and others, were familiar to our writers, and they make occasional mention of some few French authors, as Ronsard and Du Bartas; for the French literature had not at this stage arrived at its Augustan period, and it was the imitation of their literature a century afterwards, when it had arrived at its greatest height (itself copied from the Greek and Latin,) that enfeebled and impoverished our own. But of the time that we are considering, it might be said, without much extravagance that every breath that blew, every wave that rolled to our shores, brought with it some accession to our knowledge, which was engrafted on the national genius. In fact, all the disposable materials that had been accumulating for a long period of time, either in our own or in foreign countries, were now brought

together, and required nothing more than to be wrought up, polished, or arranged in striking forms, for ornament and use. To this every inducement prompted; the novelty of the acquisition of knowledge in many cases, the emulation of foreign wits, and of immortal works, the want and the expectation of such works among ourselves, the opportunity and encouragement afforded for their production by leisure and affluence; and, above all, the insatiable desire of the mind to beget its own image, and to construct out of itself, and for the delight and admiration of the world and posterity, that excellence of which the idea exists hitherto only in its own breast, and the impression of which it would make as universal as the eye of heaven, the benefit as common as the air we breathe. The first impulse of genius is to create what never existed before: the contemplation of that which is so created is sufficient to satisfy the demands of taste; and it is the habitual study and imitation of the original models that takes away the power, and even wish to do the like. [illegible]

[illegible]

to the Straits of Magellan that Shakspeare has taken the hint of Prospero's Enchanted Island, and of the savage Caliban with his god Setebos.* Spenser seems to have had the same feeling in his mind in the production of his Faery Queen, and vindicates his poetic fiction on this very ground of analogy.

> " Right well I wote, most mighty sovereign,
> That all this famous antique history
> Of some the abundance of an idle brain
> Will judged be, and painted forgery,
> Rather than matter of just memory:
> Since none that breatheth living air, doth know
> Where is that happy land of faery
> Which I so much do vaunt, but nowhere show,
> But vouch antiquities which nobody can know.
>
> But let that man with better sense avise,
> That of the world least part to us is read:
> And daily how through hardy enterprize
> Many great regions are discovered,
> Which to late age were never mentioned.
> Who ever heard of the Indian Peru?
> Or who in venturous vessel measured
> The Amazon's huge river, now found true?
> Or fruitfullest Virginia who did ever view?
>
> Yet all these where when no man did them know,
> Yet have from wisest ages hidden been:
> And later times things more unknown shall show.
> Why then should witless man so much misween
> That nothing is but that which he hath seen?
> What, if within the moon's fair shining sphere,
> What, if in every other star unseen,
> Of other worlds he happily should hear?
> He wonder would much more; yet such to some appear."

Fancy's air-drawn pictures after history's waking dream showed like clouds over mountains; and from the romance of real life to the idlest fiction, the transition seemed easy. Shakspeare, as well as others of his time, availed himself of the old Chronicles, and of the traditions or fabulous inventions contained in them in such ample measure, and which had not yet been appropriated to the purposes of poetry or the drama. The stage

* See a Voyage to the Straits of Magellan, 1594.

was a new thing; and those who had to supply the demands and their hands upon whatever came within their reach: they were not particular as to the means, so that they gained the end. Leechcraft and Lapidaries; Herbals; Orientalisms; Hunnorous Danish and Macedonian Stories; one of which is to be found in Saxo Grammaticus, in the last of Hadingus. The Giantesses and the Witches in each are antecedent to the old Gothic history. There was also a connecting link between the poetry of this age and the supernatural belief, as it is termed, that the heart and the brain was the seat, and in full force and visible operation among the vulgar (to say nothing in the time of our ancestors. The appearing and withdrawing of supernatural [illegible] to unloose enchantments [illegible] were known with existing matters [illegible] and in full force and visible operation among the vulgar [illegible] the expression of the tongue, the weakness of the mind, consequences. Year [illegible] Times, is as it was with the many matters. Magic and secret [illegible] the imperfect state of the people were to be consulted; and the [illegible] and terrible means that would stamp the [illegible]

and desperate catastrophes. The tales of Boccacio are founded on the great pestilence of Florence; Fletcher the poet died of the plague, and Marlowe was stabbed in a tavern quarrel. The strict authority of parents, the inequality of ranks, or the hereditary feuds between different families, made more unhappy loves or matches.

"The course of true love never did run smooth."

Again, the heroic and martial spirit which breathes in our elder writers, was yet in considerable activity in the reign of Elizabeth. "The age of chivalry was not then quite gone, nor the glory of Europe extinguished for ever." Jousts and tournaments were still common with the nobility in England and in foreign countries. Sir Philip Sidney was particularly distinguished for his proficiency in these exercises (and indeed fell a martyr to his ambition as a soldier)—and the gentle Surrey was still more famous, on the same account, just before him. It is true, the general use of fire-arms gradually superseded the necessity of skill in the sword, or bravery in the person: and we find many symptoms of the rapid degeneracy in this respect. It was comparatively an age of peace,

"Like strength reposing on his own right arm;"

but the sound of civil combat might still be heard in the distance, the spear glittered to the eye of memory, or the clashing of armour struck on the imagination of the ardent and the young They were borderers on the savage state, on the times of war and bigotry, though in the lap of arts, of luxury, and knowledge. They stood on the shore and saw the billows rolling after the storm: "they heard the tumult, and were still." The manners and out-of-door amusements were more tinctured with a spirit of adventure and romance. The war with wild beasts, &c., was more strenuously kept up in country sports. I do not think we could get from sedentary poets, who had never mingled in the vicissitudes, the dangers, or excitements of the chase, such descriptions of hunting and other athletic games, as are to be found in Shakspeare's Midsummer Night's Dream, or Fletcher's Noble Kinsmen.

With respect to the good cheer and hospitable living of those times, I cannot agree with an anonymous and agreeable writer of the present day, that it was general or frequent. The very statute just quoted contradicts his assertion, for it was not necessary to keep up the same Saturnalian license and open house all the year round. They reserved themselves for great occasions, and made the best amends they could for a year of drab existence by a week of merriment and convivial indulgence. Persons in middle life at this day, who can afford a good dinner every day, do not look forward to it as any particular subject of entertainment: the poor peasant, who can only contrive to treat himself to a piece of meat on a Sunday, considers it as an event in the week. So, in the old Cambridge comedy of the Returne from Parnassus, we find this indignant description of the progress of luxury in the days of Queen Elizabeth, and of the sparseness

> "Why, [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> Hath [illegible]
> Create [illegible]
> How [illegible]
> He [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
>
> Act III. Sc. 2.

This does not look as if in those days "it was beef, meat and victuals," as a matter of course throughout the year. Upon the contrary, the habits of different periods, and very different periods, were as they have since been, and as they will be, we hope, for ever. Mr. [illegible]

existed "in act and complement extern." The poetry of former times might be directly taken from real life, as our poetry is taken from the poetry of former times. Finally, the face of nature, which was the same glorious object then that it is now, was open to them; and coming first, they gathered her fairest flowers to live for ever in their verse—the movements of the human heart were not hid from them, for they had the same passions as we, only less disguised, and less subject to control. Decker has given an admirable description of a mad-house in one of his plays. But it might be perhaps objected, that it was only a literal account taken from Bedlam at that time: and it might be answered, that the old poets took the same methods of describing the passions and fancies of men whom they met at large, which forms the point of communion between us; for the title of the old play, 'A Mad World, my Masters,' is hardly yet obsolete; and we are pretty much the same Bedlam still, perhaps a little better managed, like the real one, and with more care and humanity shown to the patients!

Lastly, to conclude this account; what gave a unity and common direction to all these causes, was the natural genius of the country, which was strong in these writers in proportion to their strength. We are a nation of islanders, and we cannot help it; nor mend ourselves if we would. We are something in ourselves, nothing when we try to ape others. Music and painting are not our *forte:* for what we have done in that way has been little, and that borrowed from others with great difficulty. But we may boast of our poets and philosophers. That's something. We have had strong heads and sound hearts among us. Thrown on one side of the world, and left to bustle for ourselves, we have fought out many a battle for truth and freedom. That is our natural style; and it were to be wished we had in no instance departed from it. Our situation has given us a certain cast of thought and character; and our liberty has enabled us to make the most of it. We are of a stiff clay, not moulded into every fashion, with stubborn joints not easily bent. We are slow to think, and therefore impressions do not work upon us till they act in masses. We are not forward to express our feelings, and therefore they do not come from us till they force their way in

the most impetuous eloquence. Our language is, as it were, to begin anew, and we make use of the most singular and boldest combinations to explain ourselves. Our wit comes from us, "like birdlime, brains and all." We pay too little attention to form and method, leave our works in an unfinished state, but still the materials we work in are solid and of nature's mint; we do not deal in counterfeits. We both under and overdo, but we keep an eye to the prominent features, the main chance. We are more for weight than show; care only about what interests ourselves, instead of trying to impose upon others by plausible appearances, and are obstinate and intractable in not conforming to common rules, by which many arrive at their ends with half the real waste of thought and trouble. We neglect all but the principal object, gather our force to make a great blow, bring it down, and relapse into sluggishness and indifference again. *Materiam superabat opus*, cannot be said of us. We may be accused of grossness, but not of flimsiness; of extravagance, but not of affectation; of want of art and refinement, but not of a want of truth and nature. Our literature, in a word, is Gothic and grotesque; unequal and irregular; not cast in a previous mould, nor of one uniform texture, but of great weight in the whole, and of incomparable value in the best parts. It aims at an excess of beauty or power, hits or misses, and is either very good indeed, or absolutely good for nothing. This character applies in particular to our literature in the age of which [illegible]

[illegible] more!"

LECTURE II.

On the Dramatic Writers contemporary with Shakspeare, Lyly, Marlowe, Heywood, Middleton, and Rowley.

THE period of which I shall have to treat (from the Reformation to the middle of Charles I.) was prolific in dramatic excellence even more than in any other. In approaching it, we seem to be approaching the RICH STRAND described in Spenser, where treasures of all kinds lay scattered, or rather crowded together on the shore in inexhaustible but unregarded profusion, "rich as the oozy bottom of the deep in sunken wrack and sumless treasuries." We are confounded with the variety, and dazzled with the dusky splendour of names sacred in their obscurity, and works gorgeous in their decay, "majestic, though in ruin," like Guyon when he entered the Cave of Mammon, and was shown the massy pillars and huge unwieldy fragments of gold, covered with dust and cobwebs, and shedding a faint shadow of uncertain light,

> "Such as a lamp whose light doth fade away
> Or as the moon clothed with cloudy night
> Doth show to him that walks in fear and sad affright."

The dramatic literature of this period only wants exploring, to fill the inquiring mind with wonder and delight, and to convince us that we have been wrong in lavishing all our praise on "new-born gauds, though they are made and moulded of things past;" and in "giving to dust, that is a little gilt, more laud than gilt o'er-dusted." In short, the discovery of such an unsuspected and forgotten mine of wealth will be found amply to repay the labour of the search, and it will be hard if in most cases curiosity does not end in admiration, and modesty teach us wisdom. A few of the most singular productions of these times remain unclaimed; of others, the authors are uncertain; many of them

resources within himself to strike out a new path, he merely adhered with modesty and caution to the classical models with which, as a scholar, he was well acquainted. The language of the dialogue is clear, unaffected, and intelligible without the smallest difficulty, even to this day; it has "no figures nor no fantasies," to which the most fastidious critic can object, but the dramatic power is nearly none at all. It is written expressly to set forth the dangers and mischiefs that arise from the division of sovereign power; and the several speakers dilate upon the different views of the subject in turn, like clever school-boys set to compose a thesis, or declaim upon the fatal consequences of ambition, and the uncertainty of human affairs. The author, in the end, declares for the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance; a doctrine which indeed was seldom questioned at that time of day. Eubulus, one of the old king's counsellors thus gives his opinion—

> "Eke fully with the duke my mind agrees,
> That no cause serves, whereby the subject may
> Call to account the doings of his prince;
> Much less in blood by sword to work revenge:
> No more than may the hand cut off the head.
> In act nor speech, no nor in secret thought,
> The subject may rebel against his lord,
> Or judge of him that sits in Cæsar's seat,
> With grudging mind to damn those he mislikes.
> Though kings forget to govern as they ought,
> Yet subjects must obey as they are bound."

Yet how little he was borne out in this inference by the unbiassed dictates of his own mind, may appear from the freedom and unguarded boldness of such lines as the following, addressed by a favourite to a prince, as courtly advice:

> "Know ye that lust of kingdoms hath no law:
> The gods do bear and will allow in kings
> The things that they abhor in rascal routs.
> When kings on slender quarrels run to wars,
> And then in cruel and unkindly wise
> Command thefts, rapes, murder of innocents,
> The spoil of towns, ruins of mighty realms;
> Think you such princes do suppose themselves

> Subject to [illegible]
> Murders [illegible]
> Are [illegible];
> Yet [illegible]
> Of [illegible]

The principal characters make as many set speeches to the names of their children, their country, and their friends, as Cicero in his Orations, and all the topics insisted upon are open, direct, urged in the face of day, with no attention to time or place, to an enemy who overhears, or an accomplice to whom they are addressed; in a word, with no more dramatic insinuations or bye-play than the pleadings in a court of law. Almost the only passage that I can instance as rising above this didactic tone of mediocrity into the region of poetry, is one where Marcella laments the untimely death of her lover, Ferrex:

> "Ah! noble prince, how oft have I beheld
> Thee mounted on thy fierce and trampling steed,
> Shining in armour bright before the tilt,
> And with thy mistress' sleeve tied on thy helm,
> And charge thy staff to please thy lady's eye,
> That bowed the head-piece of thy friendly foe!
> How oft in arms on horse to bend the mace,
> How oft in arms on foot to break the sword,
> Which never now these eyes may see again!"

There seems a reference to Chaucer in the wording of the following lines:—

> "Then saw I how he smiled with slaying knife
> Wrapped under cloak, then saw I deep deceit
> Lurk in his face and death prepared for life." *

Sir Philip Sidney says of this tragedy, that "Gorboduc is full of stately speeches, and well-sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca his style, and as full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach, and thereby obtain the very end of poesy." And Mr. Pope, whose taste in these matters was very different from Sir Philip Sidney's, [illegible]

* "The smiler with the knife [illegible]." [illegible]

stronger terms: "That the writers of the succeeding age might have improved as much in other respects, by copying from him a propriety in the sentiments, an unaffected perspicuity of style, and an easy flow in the numbers. In a word, that chastity, correctness, and gravity of style, which are so essential to tragedy, and which all the tragic poets who followed, not excepting Shakspeare himself, either little understood, or perpetually neglected." It was well for us and them that they did so!

The Induction to the Mirrour for Magistrates does his muse more credit. It sometimes reminds one of Chaucer, and at others seems like an anticipation, in some degree, both of the measure and manner of Spenser. The following stanzas may give the reader an idea of the merit of this old poem, which was published in 1563:

"By him lay heauie Sleepe cosin of Death
Flat on the ground, and still as any stone,
A very corps, saue yeelding foith a breath.
Small keepe tooke he whom Fortune frowned on,
Or whom she lifted vp into the throne
Of high renowne, but as a liuing death,
So dead aliue, of life he drew the breath.

The bodies rest, the quiet of the hart,
The trauiles ease, the still nights feere was he.
And of our life in earth the better part,
Reuer of sight, and in whom we see
Things oft that tide, and oft that neuer bee.
Without respect esteeming equally
King *Cræsus* pompe, and *Irus* pouertie.

And next in order sad Old Age we found,
His beard all hoare, his eyes hollow and blind,
With drouping cheere still poring on the ground,
As on the place where nature him assign'd
To rest, when that the sister's had vntwin'd
His vitall thred, and ended with their knife
The fleeting course of fast declining life.

There heard we him with broke and hollow plaint
Rew with himselfe his end approaching fast,
And all for nought his wretched mind torment,
With sweete remembrance of his pleasures past,
And fresh delites of lustie youth forewast.

Re[illegible] w[illegible] shreek?
An[illegible] Love to seeke.

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
As [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
He w[illegible]
[illegible]
And [illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

John Lyly, born in the Weald of Kent about the year 1553, was the author of Midas and Endymion, of Alexander and Campaspe, and of the comedy of Mother Bombie. Of the last [illegible] very [illegible] what [illegible] I may here observe [illegible] that [illegible] things that [illegible]

it is characteristic of the age, when, in fact, it is neither; for there are good and bad in almost all ages, and one age excels in one thing, another in another—only one age may excel more and in higher things than another, but none can excel equally and completely in all. The writers of Elizabeth, as poets, soared to the height they did by indulging their own unrestrained enthusiasm; as comic writers they chiefly copied the manners of the age, which did not give them the same advantages over their successors. Lyly's comedy, for instance, is "poor, unfledged, has never winged from view o' th' nest," and tries in vain to rise above the ground with crude conceits and clumsy levity. Lydia, the heroine of the piece, is silly enough, if the rest were but as witty. But the author has shown no partiality in the distribution of his gifts. To say the truth, it was a very common fault of the old comedy, that its humours were too low, and the weaknesses exposed too great to be credible, or an object of ridicule, even if they were. The affectation of their courtiers is passable, and diverting as a contrast to present manners; but the eccentricities of their clowns are "very tolerable, and not to be endured." Any kind of activity of mind might seem to the writers better than none: any nonsense served to amuse their hearers; any cant phrase, any coarse allusion, any pompous absurdity, was taken for wit and drollery. Nothing could be too mean, too foolish, too improbable, or too offensive, to be a proper subject for laughter. Any one (looking hastily at this side of the question only) might be tempted to suppose the youngest children of Thespis a very callow brood, chirping their slender notes, or silly swains "grating their lean and flashy jests on scrannel pipes of wretched straw." The genius of comedy looked too often like a lean and hectic pantaloon; love was a slip-shod shepherdess; wit a parti-coloured fool like harlequin, and the plot came hobbling like a clown after all. A string of impertinent and farcical jests (or rather blunders), was with great formality ushered into the world as "a right pleasant and conceited comedy." Comedy could not descend lower than it sometimes did, without glancing at physical imperfections and deformity. The two young persons in the play before us, on whom the event of the plot chiefly hinges, do in fact turn out to

laidest down thy head is now become a tree." The narrative is sometimes a little wandering and desultory; but if it had been ten times as tedious, this thought would have redeemed it; for I cannot conceive of anything more beautiful, more simple, or touching, than this exquisitely chosen image and dumb proof of the manner in which he passed his life, from youth to old age, in a dream, a dream of love. Happy Endymion! Faithful Eumenides! Divine Cynthia! Who would not wish to pass his life in such a sleep, a long, long sleep, dreaming of some fair heavenly Goddess, with the moon shining upon his face and the trees growing silently over his head!—There is something in this story which has taken a strange hold of my fancy, perhaps "out of my weakness and my melancholy;" but for the satisfaction of the reader I will quote the whole passage:—"It is silly sooth, and dallies with the innocence of love like the old age."

"*Cynthia.* Well, let us to Endymion. I will not be so stately (good Endymion) not to stoop to do thee good; and if thy liberty consist in a kiss from me, thou shalt have it. And although my mouth hath been heretofore as untouched as my thoughts, yet now to recover thy life (though to restore thy youth it be impossible) I will do that to Endymion which yet never mortal man could boast of heretofore, nor shall ever hope for hereafter. (*She kisses him.*)

Eumenides. Madam, he beginneth to stir.

Cynthia. Soft, Eumenides, stand still.

Eumenides. Ah! I see his eyes almost open.

Cynthia. I command thee once again, stir not: I will stand behind him.

Pandion. What do I see? Endymion almost awake?

Eumenides. Endymion, Endymion, art thou deaf or dumb? Or hath this long sleep taken away thy memory? Ah! my sweet Endymion, seest thou not Eumenides, thy faithful friend; thy faithful Eumenides, who for thy sake hath been careless of his own content? Speak, Endymion! Endymion! Endymion!

Endymion. Endymion! I call to mind such a name.

Eumenides. Hast thou forgotten thyself, Endymion? Then do I not marvel thou remembrest not thy friend. I tell thee thou art Endymion, and I Eumenides. Behold also, Cynthia, by whose favour thou art awaked, and by whose virtue thou shalt continue thy natural course.

Cynthia. Endymion! Speak, sweet Endymion! knowest thou not Cynthia!

Endymion. Oh heavens! whom do I behold? Fair Cynthia, divine Cynthia?

Cynthia. I am Cynthia, and thou Endymion.

It is singular that the style of this author, which is extremely sweet and flowing, should have been the butt of ridicule to his contemporaries, particularly Drayton, who compliments Sydney as the author that

> "Did first reduce
> Our tongue from Lyly's writing, then in use;
> Talking of stones, stars, plants, of fishes, flies,
> Playing with words and idle similes,
> As the English apes and very zanies be
> Of every thing that they do hear and see."

Which must apply to the prose style of his work, called "Euphues and his England," and is much more like Sir Philip Sydney's own manner, than the dramatic style of our poet. Besides the passages above quoted, I might refer to the opening speeches of Midas, and again to the admirable contention between Pan and Apollo for the palm of music.—His Alexander and Campaspe is another sufficient answer to the charge. This play is a very pleasing transcript of old manners and sentiment. It is full of sweetness and point, of Attic salt and the honey of Hymettus. The following song given to Apelles, would not disgrace the mouth of the prince of painters:

> "Cupid and my Campaspe play'd
> At cards for kisses, Cupid paid;
> He stakes his quiver, bow, and arrows:
> His mother's doves and team of sparrows;
> Loses them too, then down he throws
> The coral of his lip, the rose
> Growing on 's cheek (but none knows how)
> With these the crystal of his brow
> And then the dimple of his chin;
> All these did my Campaspe win.
> At last he set her both his eyes,
> She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
> O, Love! has she done this to thee?
> What shall, alas! become of me?"

The conclusion of this drama is as follows. Alexander addressing himself to Apelles, says,

"Well, enjoy one another: I give her thee frankly, Apelles. Thou shalt

consequences, and leagues himself with demoniacal power, with "fate and metaphysical aid." The idea of witchcraft and necromancy, once the dread of the vulgar and the darling of the visionary recluse, seems to have had its origin in the restless tendency of the human mind, to conceive of and aspire to more than it can achieve by natural means, and in the obscure apprehension that the gratification of this extravagant and unauthorized desire can only be attained by the sacrifice of all our ordinary hopes and better prospects, to the infernal agents that lend themselves to its accomplishment. Such is the foundation of the present story. Faustus, in his impatience to fulfil at once and for a moment, for a few short years, all the desires and conceptions of his soul, is willing to give in exchange his soul and body to the great enemy of mankind. Whatever he fancies, becomes by this means present to his sense: whatever he commands is done. He calls back time past, and anticipates the future: the visions of antiquity pass before him, Babylon in all its glory, Paris and Œnone: all the projects of philosophers, or creations of the poet, pay tribute at his feet: all the delights of fortune, of ambition, of pleasure, and of learning are centred in his person; and from a short-lived dream of supreme felicity and drunken power, he sinks into an abyss of darkness and perdition. This is the alternative to which he submits; the bond which he signs with his blood! As the outline of the character is grand and daring, the execution is abrupt and fearful. The thoughts are vast and irregular; and the style halts and staggers under them, "with uneasy steps;"—"such footing found the sole of unblest feet." There is a little fustian and incongruity of metaphor now and then, which is not very injurious to the subject. It is time to give a few passages in illustration of this account. He thus opens his mind at the beginning:

> "How am I glutted with conceit of this!
> Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please?
> Resolve me of all ambiguities?
> Perform what desperate enterprize I will?
> I'll have them fly to India for gold,
> Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
> And search all corners of the new-found world
> For pleasant fruits and princely delicates.

I'll have [illegible] shall supply,
And [illegible]
I'll have [illegible] Orontes' [illegible],
And make [illegible] Wittenberg;
I'll have [illegible]
Where [illegible]
I'll [illegible] with [illegible],
And [illegible] Prince of Persia [illegible],
And [illegible]
You [illegible] War
That was the first [illegible],
I'll make my servile [illegible].

Enter Venus, Cupid, &c.

Come, [illegible]
And [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] first
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
And I that love
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
As [illegible]
So [illegible]
Pendant [illegible]
Like [illegible];
Like [illegible] waves,
Or [illegible]
So [illegible]
So [illegible]
[illegible] Love
[illegible]
And [illegible]
Tit[illegible] my*,
If learned Fates will have it so.

* And [illegible] on.

Faustus. As resolute am I in this
As thou to live, therefore object it not."

In his colloquy with the fallen angel, he shows the fixedness of his determination :—

"What! is great Mephostophilis so passionate
For being deprived of the joys of heaven?
Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude,
And scorn those joys thou never shalt possess."

Yet we afterwards find him faltering in his resolution, and struggling with the extremity of his fate :

"My heart is harden'd, I cannot repent:
Scarce can I name salvation, faith, or heaven;
Swords, poisons, halters, and envenom'd steel
Are laid before me to dispatch myself;
And long ere this I should have done the deed,
Had not sweet pleasure conquer'd deep despair.
Have I not made blind Homer sing to me
Of Alexander's love and Œnon's death?
And hath not he that built the walls of Thebes
With ravishing sounds of his melodious harp,
Made music with my Mephostophilis?
Why should I die then or basely despair?
I am resolv'd, Faustus shall not repent.
Come, Mephostophilis, let us dispute again,
And reason of divine astrology."

There is one passage more of this kind, which is so striking and beautiful, so like a rapturous and deeply passionate dream, that I cannot help quoting it here : it is the address to the Apparition of Helen.

Enter HELEN *again, passing over between two Cupids.*

Faustus. Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,
And burnt the topless tow'rs of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
Her lips suck forth my soul! See where it flies.
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
Here will I dwell, for Heav'n is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
I will be Paris, and for love of thee,
Instead of Troy shall Wittenberg be sack'd;
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,

And wear thy colours on my plumed crest;
Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Heaven for a kiss.
—Oh! stand not fearful of the evening air,
Or at the misery of a chaste cold night:
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter,
When he appeared to hapless Semele,
More lovely than the monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azure arms;
And none but thou shalt be my paramour."

The ending of the play is terrible, and his last exclamations betray an anguish of mind and vehemence of passion not to be contemplated without shuddering:

—"Oh, Faustus!
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live,
And then thou must be damned perpetually.
Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come.
Fair nature's eye, rise, rise again and make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but a year,
A month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent, and save his soul.
O lente, lente currite, noctis equi!
The stars move still, time runs, the clock will strike,
The devil will come, and Faustus must be damned.
O, I'll leap up to my God! Who pulls me down?
See, see where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
One drop would save my soul, half a drop: ah, my Christ!
Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
Yet will I call on him: O, spare me, Lucifer!
Where is it now? 'tis gone: and see where God
Stretcheth out his arm, and bends his ireful brows!
Mountains and hills, come, come and fall on me,
And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!
No, no!
Then will I headlong run into the earth:
Gape, earth! O, no, it will not harbour me.
You stars that reigned at my nativity,
Whose influence hath allotted death and hell,
Now draw up Faustus like a foggy mist
Into the entrails of yon labouring cloud,
That when you vomit forth into the air
My limbs may issue from your smoky mouths,
So that my soul may but ascend to heaven."

Perhaps the finest [illegible] in the whole play, and that which suffers most from the [illegible] is the invocation to Helen by the two scholars, in the first scene of the fourth act, and the words are worthy to have come from the lips of Faustus himself. The poet to whom [illegible] this drama, and [illegible] from [illegible] has been [illegible] Faustus:

"Yet, fair is woman's beauty, when it is

> For wondrous knowledge in our German schools,
> We'll give his mangled limbs due burial;
> And all the students, clothed in mourning black,
> Shall wait upon his heavy funeral."

So the Chorus:

> "Cut is the branch that might have grown full strait,
> And burned is Apollo's laurel bough,
> That sometime grew within this learned man."

And still more affecting are his own conflicts of mind and agonizing doubts on this subject just before, when he exclaims to his friends: "Oh, gentlemen! Hear me with patience, and tremble not at my speeches. Though my heart pant and quiver to remember that I have been a student here these thirty years; oh! would I had never seen Wittenberg, never read book!" A finer compliment was never paid, nor a finer lesson ever read to the pride of learning. The intermediate comic parts, in which Faustus is not directly concerned, are mean and grovelling to the last degree. One of the Clowns says to another, "Snails! what hast got there? A book? Why thou can'st not tell ne'er a word on't." Indeed, the ignorance and barbarism of the time, as here described, might almost justify Faustus's overstrained admiration of learning, and turn the heads of those who possessed it from novelty and unaccustomed excitement, as the Indians are made drunk with wine! Goëthe, the German poet, has written a drama on this tradition of his country, which is considered a master-piece. I cannot find in Marlowe's play, any proofs of the atheism or impiety attributed to him, unless the belief in witchcraft and the Devil can be regarded as such; and at the time he wrote, not to have believed in both would have been construed into the rankest atheism and irreligion. There is a delight, as Mr. Lamb says, "in dallying with interdicted subjects;" but that does not, by any means, imply either a practical or speculative disbelief of them.

'Lust's Dominion, or The Lascivious Queen,' is referable to the same general style of writing; and is a striking picture, or rather caricature of the unrestrained love of power, not as

connected with learning, but with regal ambition and external sway. There is a good deal of the same intense passion, the same recklessness of purpose, the same unsparing fire within: but there is not any of the same relief to the mind in the highly imaginative nature of the subject, and the continual repetition of plain practical villainy and undigested horrors disgusts the sense and blunts the interest. The mind is hurried into obduracy, not melted into sympathy, by such barbarous and barbarous cruelty. Eleazar, the Moor, is such another character as Aaron in 'Titus Andronicus;' and this play might be set down without injustice as "powerful" too. I should think Marlowe has a much fairer claim to be the author of 'Titus Andronicus' than Shakspeare, at least from internal evidence; and the arrangement of Selimus, more unlike than from Shakspeare's, because there was more room capable of producing contrasts of character in some particulars. The Queen is the same character and station, placed in the same relation to the plot: is carried on much the same way (Queen-like) by making the nearest friends and relations of the wretch she is to ruin the instruments of their suffering, and professing any thing to claim. To show, however, that the same strength and power of passionate declamation is to be found, take the speech of Eleazar on refusing the proffered crown:

> "W
> N
> A
> T
> W
> T
> D
> S
> O
> A
> T
> I
> A
> T
> A
> T
> To this

This usurpation; wiping off your fears
Which struck so hard upon me."

This is enough to show the unabated vigour of the author's style. This strain is certainly doing justice to the pride of ambition, and the imputed majesty of kings.

We have heard much of "Marlowe's mighty line," and this play furnishes frequent instances of it. There are a number of single lines that seem struck out in the heat of a glowing fancy, and leave a track of golden fire behind them. The following are a few that might be given.

"I know he is not dead; I know proud death
Durst not behold such sacred majesty."
* * * * *
"Hang both your greedy ears upon my lips,
Let them devour my speech, suck in my breath."
* * * * *
——"From discontent grows treason,
And on the stalk of treason death."
* * * * *
"Tyrants swim safest in a crimson flood."
* * * * *

The two following lines—

"Oh! I grow dull, and the cold hand of sleep
Hath thrust his icy fingers in my breast"-

are the same as those in King John—

"And none of you will bid the winter come
To thrust his icy fingers in my maw."

And again the Moor's exclamation:

"Now by the proud complexion of my cheeks,
Ta'en from the kisses of the amorous sun"

is the same as Cleopatra's—

"But I that am with Phœbus' amorous pinches black," &c.

Eleazer's sarcasm,

[illegible]
Like [illegible] sweet [illegible]
[illegible] sweet [illegible]

shows the utmost vehemence of sordid [illegible]; and its concluding strain of malignant exultation has been not tamely imitated by Young's Zanga:

"Now [illegible] of the night,
[illegible]
Upon [illegible]
The [illegible]
To [illegible] looks
And [illegible]
[illegible]

It may be worth while to observe, for the sake of the curious, that [illegible] Marlowe [illegible] Caro [illegible] "Spaniard or Moor, [illegible] may perhaps have suggested Falconbridge's [illegible] of the phrase, "And hang a calf's-skin on those recreant limbs."

I do not think 'The Rich Jew of Malta' so characteristic a specimen of this writer's powers. It has not the same [illegible]

* [illegible]

† [illegible]

[illegible]
[illegible]
W[illegible]

his own unaccountable villanies to Ithamore; his rejoicing over his recovered jewels "as the morning lark sings over her young;" and the backwardness he declares in himself to forgive the Christian injuries that are offered him,* which may have given the idea of one of Shylock's speeches, where he ironically disclaims any enmity to the merchants on the same account. It is perhaps hardly fair to compare the Jew of Malta with the Merchant of Venice; for it is evident that Shakspeare's genius shows to as much advantage in knowledge of character, in variety, and stage-effect, as it does in point of general humanity.

Edward II. is, according to the modern standard of composi-

> His hands are hack'd, some fingers cut quite off,
> Who when he speaks, grunts like a hog, and looks
> Like one that is employed in catzerie,
> And cross-biting; such a rogue
> As is the husband to a hundred whores;
> And I by him must send three hundred crowns."
>
> *Act IV.*

* "In spite of these swine-eating Christians
(Unchosen nation, never circumcised;
Such poor villains as were ne'er thought upon,
Till Titus and Vespasian conquer'd us)
Am I become as wealthy as I am.
They hoped my daughter would have been a nun,
But she's at home, and I have bought a house
As great and fair as is the Governor's:
And there, in spite of Malta, will I dwell,
Having Ferneze's hand; whose heart I'll have,
Ay, and his son's too, or it shall go hard.

"I am not of the tribe of Levi, I,
That can so soon forget an injury.
We Jews can fawn like spaniels when we please;
And when we grin we bite; yet are our looks
As innocent and harmless as a lamb's.
I learn'd in Florence how to kiss my hand,
Heave up my shoulders when they call me dog,
And duck as low as any bare-foot Friar:
Hoping to see them starve upon a stall,
Or else be gather'd for in our synagogue,
That when the offering bason comes to me,
Even for charity I may spit into it"

ti n. Marlowe's best play. It is written with few offences against the common rules, and in a stately manner of speech and flowing verse. The poet however shows his weakness in the vituperative and effeminate descriptions which he tries to attempt, both in the more dreadful and violent bursts of passion. Edward II is drawn with historic truth, but without much dramatic effect. The management of the plot is feeble and desultory; little art is exercised in the various turns of fate; the characters are unskilful, have too little energy, and their punishment is not generally so well deserved to excite our commiseration; so that this play will bear, on the whole, but a distant comparison with Shakspeare's Richard II in conduct, power, or effect. But the death of Edward II, in Marlowe's tragedy, is certainly superior to that of Shakspeare's King; and in heart-breaking distress, and the sense of intense weakness, claiming pity from utter helplessness and extreme misery, is not surpassed by any writer whatever.

> [illegible] Weigh'st thou anguish? It is sweet to me,
> And that my heart, worn'd as the Caspian sea,
> Or as Mount Ætna, [illegible]
> Yet will it not [illegible] by any fable
> That ever was devised, or thought, to sink
> With [illegible]
> *L.* [illegible]
> *L.* [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]

The [illegible] Kent, [illegible] down. [illegible] and [illegible] poor,

when wounded, are among the best. The song "Come live with me and be my love," to which Sir Walter Raleigh wrote an answer, is Marlowe's.

Heywood I shall mention next, as a direct contrast to Marlowe in everything but the smoothness of his verse. As Marlowe's imagination glows like a furnace, Heywood's is a gentle lambent flame, that purifies without consuming. His manner is simplicity itself. There is nothing supernatural, nothing startling, or terrific. He makes use of the commonest circumstances of every-day life, and of the easiest tempers, to show the workings, or rather the inefficacy of the passions, the *vis inertiæ* of tragedy. His incidents strike from their very familiarity, and the distresses he paints invite our sympathy from the calmness and resignation with which they are borne. The pathos might be deemed purer from its having no mixture of turbulence or vindictiveness in it; and in proportion as the sufferers are made to deserve a better fate. In the midst of the most untoward reverses and cutting injuries, good nature and good sense keep their accustomed sway. He describes men's errors with tenderness, and their duties only with zeal, and the heightenings of a poetic fancy. His style is equally natural, simple, and unconstrained. The dialogue (bating the verse) is such as might be uttered in ordinary conversation. It is beautiful prose put into heroic measure. It is not so much that he uses the common English idiom for everything (for that I think the most poetical and impassioned of our elder dramatists do equally), but the simplicity of the characters and the equable flow of the sentiments do not require or suffer it to be warped from the tone of level speaking, by figurative expressions, or hyperbolical allusions. A few scattered exceptions occur now and then, where the hectic flush of passion forces them from the lips, and they are not the worse for being rare. Thus, in the play called 'A Woman Killed with Kindness,' Wendoll, when reproached by Mrs. Frankford with his obligations to her husband, interrupts her hastily, by saying

—— "Oh speak no more!
For more than this I know, and have recorded
Within the *red-leaved table* of my heart."

And further on, Frankford, when doubting his wife's fidelity, says, with less feeling indeed, but with much elegance of fancy,

> "Cold drops of sweat sit dangling on my hairs,
> Like morning's dew upon the golden flowers."

So also, when returning to his house at midnight to make the fatal discovery, he exclaims,

> ——"Astonishment,
> Fear, and amazement, beat upon my heart,
> Even as a madman beats upon a drum."

It is the reality of things present to their imaginations that makes these writers so fine, so bold, and yet so true in what they describe. Nature lies open to them like a book, and was not to them "invisible, or dimly seen" through a veil of words and filmy abstractions. Such poetical ornaments are however to be met with at considerable intervals in this play, and do not disturb the calm serenity and domestic simplicity of the author's style. The conclusion of Wendoll's declaration of love to Mrs. Frankford may serve as an illustration of its general merits, both as to purity of thought and diction:

> [illegible]

[illegible]

highest breach of matrimonial duty, to have made a 'Woman Killed with Kindness,' a complete anticipation of the 'Stranger.' Heywood, however, was in that respect but half a Kotzebue!—The view here given of country manners is truly edifying. As to the higher walk of tragedy, we see the manners and moral sentiments of kings and nobles of former times, here we have the feuds and amiable qualities of country 'squires and their relatives; and such as were the rulers, such were their subjects. The frequent quarrels and ferocious habits of private life are well exposed in the fatal rencounter between Sir Francis Acton and Sir Charles Mountford about a hawking match, in the ruin and rancorous persecution of the latter in consequence, and in the hard, unfeeling, cold-blooded treatment he receives in his distress from his own relations, and from a fellow of the name of Shafton. After reading the sketch of this last character, who is introduced as a mere ordinary personage, the representative of a class, without any preface or apology, no one can doubt the credibility of that of Sir Giles Overreach, who is professedly held up (I should think almost unjustly) as a prodigy of grasping and hardened selfishness. The influence of philosophy and prevalence of abstract reasoning, if it has done nothing for our poetry, has done, I should hope, something for our manners. The callous declaration of one of these unconscionable churls,

"This is no world in which to pity men,"

might have been taken as a motto for the good old times in general, and with a very few reservations, if Heywood has not grossly libelled them.—Heywood's plots have little of artifice or regularity of design to recommend them. He writes on carelessly, as it happens, and trusts to Nature, and a certain happy tranquillity of spirit, for gaining the favour of the audience. He is said, besides attending to his duties as an actor, to have composed regularly a sheet a day. This may account in some measure for the unembarrassed facility of his style. His own account makes the number of his writings for the stage, or those in which he had a main hand, upwards of two hundred. In fact, I do not wonder at any quantity that an author is said

to have written; for the more a man writes, the more he can write.

The same remarks will apply, with certain modifications, to other remaining works of this writer, the 'Royal King and Loyal Subject,' 'A Challenge for Beauty,' and 'The English Traveller.' The [illegible] arise from the mildness of the writer's temperament, and the story goes on very comfortably, without effort or resistance, to the *dénouement* of the catastrophe. In two of these the person principally aggrieved survives, and [illegible]. The most splendid passage in Heywood's comedies is the account of Shipwreck by Drink, in 'The English Traveller,' which was the foundation of Cowley's Latin poem, *Naufragium Joculare*.

The names of Middleton and Rowley, with which I shall [illegible] who frequently combined their talents in the production of joint pieces. Middleton [illegible] was [illegible] of the two; but they were neither of them [illegible]. Rowley appears to have excelled [illegible] and disinterested tone of morality, carried almost to a paradoxical excess, in his 'Fair Quarrel,' and in the comedy of 'A Woman never Vext,' which is written in many parts with a [illegible] of the conception. Middleton [illegible] by any peculiar qualities [illegible]. In 'Women beware Women,' [illegible]

portioned to each other or the size of the canvas. The author's power is *in* the subject, not *over* it; or he is in possession of excellent materials, which he husbands very ill. This character, though it applies more particularly to Middleton, might be applied generally to the age. Shakspeare alone seemed to stand over his work, and to do what he pleased with it. He saw to the end of what he was about, and with the same faculty of lending himself to the impulses of Nature and the impression of the moment, never forgot that he himself had a task to perform, nor the place which each figure ought to occupy in his general design.—The characters of Livia, of Brancha, of Leantio and his mother, in the play of which I am speaking, are all admirably drawn. The art and malice of Livia show equal want of principle and acquaintance with the world; and the scene in which she holds the mother in suspense, while she betrays the daughter into the power of the profligate duke, is a master-piece of dramatic skill. The proneness of Brancha to tread the primrose path of pleasure, after she has made the first false step, and her sudden transition from unblemished virtue to the most abandoned vice, in which she is notably seconded by her mother-in-law's ready submission to the temptations of wealth and power, form a true and striking picture. The first intimation of the intrigue that follows, is given in a way that is not a little remarkable for simplicity and acuteness. Brancha says,

> "Did not the duke look up? Methought he saw us."

To which the more experienced mother answers,

> "That's every one's conceit that sees a duke;
> If he look stedfastly, he looks straight at them,
> When he, perhaps, good careful gentleman,
> Never minds any, but the look he casts
> Is at his own intentions, and his object
> Only the public good."

It turns out, however, that he had been looking at them, and not "at the public good." The moral of this tragedy is rendered more impressive from the manly, independent character of Leantio in the first instance, and the manner in which he dwells, in a sort of doting abstraction, on his own comforts, of being possessed

of a beautiful and faithful wife. As he approaches his own house, and already treads on the [illegible] he exclaims with an exuberance [illegible] restrained—

> "How [illegible]
> That [illegible]
> The [illegible]
> As [illegible]
> Love [illegible]
> Of [illegible]
> Wh[illegible]
> The [illegible]
> Is [illegible]
> O[illegible]
> T[illegible]
> W[illegible]
> Is [illegible]
> W[illegible]
> S[illegible]
> P[illegible]
> H[illegible]
> That's built on vaults where carcases lie rotting;
> And [illegible]
> An[illegible]
> And I'm as well, methinks. Now for a welcome
> Al[illegible]
> A[illegible]
> A[illegible]
> A[illegible]
> S[illegible]
> I[illegible]
> An[illegible]

This dream is [illegible] by the entrance of Brancha and his Mother.

> *H[illegible]*
> *M[illegible]*
> *I[illegible]*
> W[illegible]
> I[illegible]
> W[illegible]
> A[illegible]
> Sa[illegible]
> *Br[illegible]*
> *Mo[illegible]*

Bran. Nay, I have been worse too,
Than now you see me, sir.
Lean. I'm glad thou mend'st yet,
I feel my heart mend too. How came it to thee?
Has any thing dislik'd thee in my absence?
Bran. No, certain, I have had the best content
That Florence can afford.
Lean. Thou makest the best on't:
Speak, mother, what's the cause? you must needs know.
Moth. Troth, I know none, son; let her speak herself;
Unless it be the same gave Lucifer a tumbling cast; that's pride.
Bran. Methinks this house stands nothing to my mind;
I'd have some pleasant lodging i' th' high street, sir;
Or if 'twere near the court, sir, that were much better;
'Tis a sweet recreation for a gentlewoman
To stand in a bay-window, and see gallants.
Lean. Now I have another temper, a mere stranger
To that of yours, it seems; I should delight
To see none but yourself.
Bran. I praise not that;
Too fond is as unseemly as too churlish;
I would not have a husband of that proneness,
To kiss me before company, for a world;
Besides, 'tis tedious to see one thing still, sir,
Be it the best that ever heart affected;
Nay, wer't yourself, whose love had power you know
To bring me from my friends, I would not stand thus,
And gaze upon you always; troth, I could not, sir;
As good be blind, and have no use of sight,
As look on one thing still: what's the eye's treasure,
But change of objects? You are learned, sir,
And know I speak not ill; 'tis full as virtuous
For woman's eye to look on several men,
As for her heart, sir, to be fixed on one.
Lean. Now, thou com'st home to me; a kiss for that word.
Bran. No matter for a kiss, sir; let it pass;
'Tis but a toy, we'll not so much as mind it;
Let's talk of other business, and forget it.
What news now of the pirates? any stirring?
Prithee discourse a little.
Moth. (*Aside.*) I'm glad he's here yet,
To see her tricks himself: I had lied monstrously
If I had told 'em first.
Lean. Speak, what's the humour, sweet,
You make your lips so strange? This was not wont.
Bran. Is there no kindness betwixt man and wife,
Unless they make a pigeon-house of friendship,

And [illegible] *Thou art deceived.*
There's two immured in one tomb?
It's [illegible]
There's [illegible]
And [illegible]
There's [illegible] *serious;*
We [illegible]
L [illegible] *so long?*
E [illegible]
Of [illegible]
And [illegible]
M [illegible]
This [illegible]
There [illegible]
And [illegible]
[*Aside.* *Duke Louis within.*
W [illegible]
L [illegible]
There [illegible]
How [illegible] [*Exit Brandon.*"

The Witches of Middleton's tragedy are a mere stage performance; but even their witchcraft, and their "charms" that Shakespeare has made use of, are the characteristic and specific marks of 'Macbeth.' Through the whole play which Middleton has given to Hecate and her sprites, in answering the purposes and perplexing the business of the fifth act, there is not a single appearance or circumstance which Shakespeare has assigned to the witches, or any thing connected with the fine invention of Macbeth's visionary dagger, that is not borrowed from the vulgar superstitions of the times, or pedantic [illegible], with a high spirit of poetry, and much powerful and masterly hand. The [illegible] are very nearly the same. The [illegible] is given to Antonio; and the substance of the principal difficulty, by Antonio's having drawn a sword on, and [illegible]. A specimen of the similarity of the [illegible] may [illegible].

I [illegible] *II*

I [illegible] *Witches*
II [illegible]
S [illegible]
H [illegible]
To [illegible]

Hop. Ours will be more to-night.
Hec. Oh, 't will be precious. Heard you the owl yet?
Stad. Briefly, in the copse,
As we came through now.
Hec. 'Tis high time for us then.
Stad. There was a bat hung at my lips three times
As we came through the woods, and drank her fill:
Old Puckle saw her.
Hec. You are fortunate still,
The very scritch-owl lights upon your shoulder,
And woos you like a pigeon. Are you furnish'd?
Have you your ointments?
Stad. All.
Hec. Prepare to flight then
I'll overtake you swiftly.
Stad. Hie then, Heccat!
We shall be up betimes.
Hec. I'll reach you quickly. [*They ascend.*

Enter FIRESTONE.

Fire. They are all going a-birding to-night. They talk of fowls i' th' air, that fly by day, I'm sure ther'll be a company of foul sluts there to-night. If we have not mortality affeared, I'll be hang'd, for they are able to putrify it, to infect a whole region. She spies me now
Hec. What, Firestone, our sweet son?
Fire. A little sweeter than some of you; or a dunghill were too good for me.
Hec. How much hast there?
Fire. Nineteen, and all brave plump ones; besides six lizards, and three serpentine eggs.
Hec. Dear and sweet boy! What herbs hast thou?
Fire. I have some mar-martin and man-dragon.
Hec. Marmarittin, and mandragora, thou would'st say.
Fire. Here's pannax, too. I thank thee; my pan akes, I am sure, with kneeling down to cut 'em
Hec. And setago,
Hedge-hissop, too! How near ne goes my cuttings!
Were they all cropt by moon-light?
Fire. Every blade of 'em, or I am a moon-calf, mother.
Hec. Hie thee home with 'em.
Look well to th' house to-night: I'm for aloft.
Fire. Aloft, quoth you? I would you would break your neck once, that I might have all quickly (*Aside.*)—Hark, hark, mother! They are above the steeple already, flying over your head with a noise of musicians.
Hec. They are indeed. Help me! Help me! I'm too late else.

SONG (*in the air above.*)

Come away, come away!
Heccat, Heccat, come away!

Her. I come, I come, I come! I come,
With all the speed I may,
With all the speed I may.
Where art thou, Strephon?

(*Enter*) *Her.*

Her. Where I [illegible]

(*Within*) *Her.*

And [illegible]
We [illegible]
Or [illegible]

Her. I will [illegible]
[illegible])

(*Within*) The [illegible]
And [illegible]
And [illegible] Muse,
Sing [illegible]

Her. O [illegible]
Where [illegible]

Nymph. [illegible]

Her. No [illegible]

Nymph. He [illegible] to her own language.

Her. [illegible]
No [illegible]
Where [illegible]
[illegible]
I [illegible]
Where [illegible]
And [illegible]
O [illegible]
O [illegible]
O [illegible]
Where [illegible]
No [illegible]
No [illegible]
No [illegible]
O [illegible]

(*Exit*) *Nymph.* [illegible]

Her. Where [illegible] Where [illegible]
[illegible]

The [illegible] Marlowe [illegible] Dekker's visit to Westminster [illegible].

" *The Witches' Habitation.*

Enter DUCHESS, HECCAT, FIRESTONE.

Hec. What death is 't you desire for Almachildes?

Duch. A sudden and a subtle.

Hec. Then I've fitted you.
Here lie the gifts of both; sudden and subtle;
His picture made in wax and gently molten
By a blue fire kindled with dead men's eyes,
Will waste him by degrees.

Duch. In what time, pr'ythee?

Hec. Perhaps in a month's progress.

Duch. What! A month?
Out upon pictures, if they be so tedious;
Give me things with some life.

Hec. Then seek no farther.

Duch. This must be done with speed, dispatched this night,
If it may possibly.

Hec. I have it for you:
Here's that will do't. Stay but perfection's time,
And that's not five hours hence.

Duch. Can'st thou do this?

Hec. Can I?

Duch. I mean, so closely.

Hec. So closely do you mean too?

Duch. So artfully, so cunningly.

Hec. Worse and worse; doubts and incredulities,
They make me mad. Let scrupulous creatures know,

> Cum volui, ripis ipsis mirantibus, amnes
> In fontes rediere suos: concussaque sisto,
> Stantia concutio cantu freta; nubila pello,
> Nubilaque induco: ventos abigoque vocoque.
> Vipereas rumpo verbis et carmine fauces;
> Et silvas moveo, jubeoque tremiscere montes,
> Et mugire solum, manesque exire sepulchris.
> Te quoque, Luna, traho.

Can you doubt me then, daughter?
That can make mountains tremble, miles of woods walk;
Whole earth's foundations bellow, and the spirits
Of the entomb'd to burst out from their marbles;
Nay, draw yon moon to my involv'd designs?

Fire. I know as well as can be when my mother's mad, and our great cat angry; for the one spits French then, and the other spits Latin.

Duch. I did not doubt you, mother.

Hec. No? what did you?
My power's so firm, it is not to be question'd.

Duch. Forgive what's past, and now I know th' offensiveness
That vexes art, I'll shun the occasion ever

H. Leave all to me and my five sisters, daughter.
It shall be conveyed [illegible]
Take you no care. My sprites know their moments;
Raven or screech-owl never 'ey'ry door,
But they cut us. I know one and they lose not by 't.
I give 'em barley soak'd in infants' blood:
They [illegible]
They gorge on't and can't fail if they come once to our horses:
We [illegible] [*Exeunt Witches.*

D. They are [illegible] well when they come hither. They ate up as much as would have made ten good mens stomachs pudding.

H. Come, no more words. Is Brunt [illegible]? Fie, stole!
Where's Sweetlips? Sirrah, and all the rest of my sisters!

D. Alas, poor [illegible] [*The other Witches appear.*

H. Give [illegible] Where?

D. Here is one and [illegible] forsooth.

H. [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible]

D. What [illegible]

H. Hey-ding-a-ding! Where is the corpus?

D. You shall have it [illegible]

He. Stir, stir about your [illegible] charm.

A CHARM-SONG.

(*They Dance and Sing round a Cauldron.*)

Black spirits and white, red spirits and grey
Mingle, mingle, mingle, you that mingle may.
Tumble [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Round, around, around, about, about;
All [illegible] pout.

1st *Witch.* Here's the blood of a bat.

H. [illegible]

2nd *Witch.* Here's [illegible]

H. [illegible]

1st *Witch.* [illegible]

2nd *Witch.* [illegible] liver.

H. [illegible]

D. [illegible] of a [illegible] witch.

A. [illegible]

He. [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible]
[illegible]
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

Fire. A tune! 'Tis to the tune of damnation then, I warrant you, and that song hath a villanous burthen.

Hec. Come, my sweet sisters; let the air strike our tune
Whilst we show reverence to yon peeping moon.

[*The Witches dance and then exeunt.*"

I will conclude this account with Mr. Lamb's observations on the distinctive characters of these extraordinary and formidable personages, as they are described by Middleton or Shakspeare:

"Though some resemblance may be traced between the Charms in Macbeth and the Incantations in this play, which is supposed to have preceded it, this coincidence will not detract much from the originality of Shakspeare. His witches are distinguished from the witches of Middleton by essential differences. These are creatures to whom man or woman, plotting some dire mischief, might resort for occasional consultation. Those originate deeds of blood, and begin bad impulses to men. From the moment that their eyes first meet Macbeth's, he is spell-bound. That meeting sways his destiny. He can never break the fascination. These Witches can hurt the body; those have power over the soul. Hecate, in Middleton, has a son, a low buffoon: the Hags of Shakspeare have neither child of their own, nor seem to be descended from any parent. They are foul anomalies, of whom we know not whence they sprung, nor whether they have beginning or ending. As they are without human passions, so they seem to be without human relations. They come with thunder and lightning, and vanish to airy music. This is all we know of them. Except Hecate, they have no names, which heightens their mysteriousness. The names, and some of the properties which Middleton has given to his Hags, excite smiles. The Weird Sisters are serious things. Their presence cannot co-exist with mirth. But in a lesser degree, the Witches of Middleton are fine creations. Their power too is, in some measure, over the mind. They 'raise jars, jealousies, strifes, like a thick scurf o'er life.' "*

* Lamb's 'Specimens of English Dramatic Poets.' Vol. I. p. 187 Moxon, London.

LECTURE III.

On Marston, Chapman, Decker, and Webster

one another, and expect posterity to have a very tender care of their reputations! The writers of this age, in general, cannot however be reproached with this infirmity. The number of plays that they wrote in conjunction is a proof of the contrary; and a circumstance no less curious, as to the division of intellectual labour, than the cordial union of sentiment it implied. Unlike most poets, the love of their art surmounted their hatred of one another. Genius was not become a vile and vulgar pretence, and they respected in others what they knew to be true inspiration in themselves. They courted the applause of the multitude, but came to one another for judgment and assistance. When we see these writers working together on the same admirable productions, year after year, as was the case with Beaumont and Fletcher, Middleton and Rowley, with Chapman, Decker, and Jonson, it reminds one of Ariosto's eloquent apostrophe to the Spirit of Ancient Chivalry, when he has seated his rival knights, Renaldo and Ferraw, on the same horse:

> "Oh ancient knights of true and noble heart,
> They rivals were, one faith they liv'd not under
> Besides, they felt their bodies shrewdly smart
> Of blows late given, and yet (behold a wonder)
> Thro' thick and thin, suspicion set apart,
> Like friends they ride, and parted not asunder,
> Until the horse with double spurring drived
> Unto a way parted in two, arrived."*

Marston's Antonio and Mellida is a tragedy of considerable force and pathos; but in the most critical parts, the author frequently breaks off or flags without any apparent reason but want of interest in his subject; and farther, the best and most affecting situations and bursts of feeling are too evidently imitations of Shakspeare. Thus the unexpected meeting between Andrugio and Lucio, in the beginning of the third act, is a direct counterpart of that between Lear and Kent, only much weakened: and the interview between Antonio and Mellida has a strong resemblance to the still more affecting one between Lear and Cordelia, and is most wantonly disfigured by the sudden introduction

* Sir John Harrington's translation.

of half a page of Italian rhymes, which gives the whole an air of burlesque. The conversation of Lucio and Andrugio, again, after his defeat, seems to have been written in direct competition with Richard the Second's remonstrance with his courtiers, who offered him consolation in his misfortunes; and no one can be at a loss to trace the allusion to Romeo's conduct on being apprized of his banishment, in the termination of the following speech:

> 'Antonio. Each man takes hence life, but no man death;
> He's a good fellow and keeps open house:
> A thousand thousand ways lead to his gate,
> To his wide-mouthed porch: when niggard life
> Hath but one little, little wicket through.
> We wring ourselves up into this wretched world,
> To pule and weep, exclaim, to curse and rail,
> To fret, and ban the fates, to strike the earth
> As I do now. Antonio, curse thy life,
> And die.'

The following short passage might be quoted as one of exquisite beauty and originality—

> —— As having clasp'd a rose
> Within my palm, the rose being ta'en away,
> My hand retains a little breath of sweet;
> So may man's trunk, his spirit slipp'd away,
> Hold still a faint perfume of his sweet guest.
>
> Act IV. Scene I.

The character of F[illegible] in this play [illegible] satirical accompaniment, and is the favourite [illegible] his own belief of [illegible] speculations on the [illegible] Quadratus and Lampatho in 'What you Will' [illegible] M[illegible] 'Malcontent.' [illegible] The character of the Duke [illegible] as the Parasite in the first [illegible],

with great sense, dignity, and spirit. He is a wise censurer of men and things, and rails at the world with charitable bitterness. He may put in a claim to a sort of family likeness to the Duke, in 'Measure for Measure,' only the latter descends from his elevation to watch in secret over serious crimes; the other is only a spy on private follies. There is something in this cast of character (at least in comedy—perhaps it neutralizes the tone and interest in tragedy), that finds a wonderful reciprocity in the breast of the reader or audience. It forms a kind of middle term or point of union between the busy actors in the scene and the indifferent bystander, insinuates the plot, and suggests a number of good wholesome reflections, for the sagacity and honesty of which we do not fail to take credit to ourselves. We are let into its confidence, and have a perfect reliance on its sincerity. Our sympathy with it is without any drawback; for it has no part to perform itself, and "is nothing, if not critical." It is a sure card to play. We may doubt the motives of heroic actions, or differ about the just limits and extreme workings of the passions; but the professed misanthrope is a character that no one need feel any scruples in trusting, since the dislike of folly and knavery in the abstract is common to knaves and fools with the wise and honest! Besides the instructive moral vein of Hercules as the Fawn or Parasitaster, which contains a world of excellent matter most aptly and wittily delivered, there are two other characters perfectly hit off, Gonzago, the old prince of Urbino, and Granuffo, one of his lords in waiting. The loquacious, good-humoured, undisguised vanity of the one is excellently relieved by the silent gravity of the other. The wit of this last character (Granuffo) consists in his not speaking a word through the whole play; he never contradicts what is said, and only assents by implication. He is a most infallible courtier, and follows the prince like his shadow, who thus graces his pretensions.

"We would be private, only Faunus stay; he is a wise fellow, daughter, a very wise fellow, for he is still just of my opinion; my Lord Granuffo, you may likewise stay, for I know you'll say nothing."

And again, a little farther on, he says—

"Faunus, this Granuffo is a right wise good lord, a man of excellent dis-

course, and never speaks; his signs to me and men of profound reach instruct abundantly; he begs suits with signs, gives favours with signs, puts off a [illegible] mourns his beard learnedly, keeps his [illegible] gravely, [illegible] nothing [illegible] and lives happily [illegible] [illegible] Hercules [illegible] an excellent [illegible] but especially to one so instrumental as [illegible] that of your Excellency.

The garrulous self-complacency of this old lord is kept up in a vein of pleasant humour; an instance of which might be given in his owning of some learned man, that "though he was no duke, yet he was wise;" and the manner in which the others play upon this foible, and make him contribute to his own discomfiture, without his having the least suspicion of the plot against him, is full of ingenuity and counterpoint. In the last scene he says, very characteristically,

"[illegible] I [illegible] things that seem [illegible] to seem [illegible] very [illegible]. I remember when I was a young man, [illegible] were [illegible] for resolution as proper for [illegible] as any were in Europe, nay Europe [illegible] not [illegible]. I was one of them. We four did [illegible] love one lady; a most chaste [illegible] she was [illegible] and so [illegible] her that, despite the sternest guard was set upon her, we had her at our pleasure. I speak it for her honour and my credit. Where shall you find such witty fellows now-a-days? Alas! how easy [illegible] Ha! [illegible] [illegible]

H [illegible] But [illegible] was [illegible]
[illegible]

To which [illegible] replies, in a strain of exulting dotage:

"[illegible]
How is it; [illegible]

at him, for God's sake; let folly's sceptre light upon him, and to the Ship of Fools with him instantly.

Dondolo. Of all these follies I arrest your grace."

Molière has built a play on nearly the same foundation, which is not much superior to the present. Marston, among other topics of satire, has a fling at the pseudo-critics and philosophers of his time, who were "full of wise saws and modern instances." Thus he freights his Ship of Fools.

"*Dondolo.* Yes, yes; but they got a supersedeas; all of them proved themselves either knaves or madmen, and so were let go: there's none left now in our ship but a few citizens that let their wives keep their shop-books, some philosophers, and a few critics; one of which critics has lost his flesh with fishing at the measure of Plautus' verses; another has vowed to get the consumption of the lungs, or to leave to posterity the true orthography and pronunciation of laughing.

Hercules. But what philosophers ha' ye?

Dondolo. Oh, very strange fellows; one knows nothing, dares not aver he lives, goes, sees, feels.

Nymphadoro. A most insensible philosopher.

Dondolo. Another, that there is no present time; and that one man to-day and to-morrow, is not the same man; so that he that yesterday owed money, to-day owes none; because he is not the same man.

Herod. Would that philosophy hold good in law?

Hercul s. But why has the Duke thus laboured to have all the fools shipped out of his dominions?

Dondolo. Marry, because he would play the fool alone without any rival.

Act IV.

Molière has enlarged upon the same topic in his *Mariage Forcé*, but not with more point or effect. Nymphadoro's reasons for devoting himself to the sex generally, and Hercules's description of the different qualifications of different men, will also be found to contain excellent specimens, both of style and matter. The disguise of Hercules as the Fawn is assumed voluntarily, and he is comparatively a calm and dispassionate observer of the times. Malevole's disguise in the Malcontent has been forced upon him by usurpation and injustice, and his invectives are accordingly more impassioned and virulent. His satire does not "like a wild goose fly, unclaimed of any man," but has a bitter and personal application. Take him in the words of the usurping Duke's account of him:

This Malevole is one of the most [illegible] with Nature [illegible] he was [illegible] of the [illegible]. H[illegible] far from any [illegible] from heaven. H[illegible] and [illegible] he thinks he may [illegible] whoso[illegible] this earth [illegible] [illegible] that to which they [illegible]. [illegible] his own [illegible] worthy [illegible] all [illegible]. I like him, [illegible] understand [illegible] weaknesses [illegible].

Hence they said

E[illegible] Maevoro[illegible]

P[illegible] J[illegible] [illegible] See [illegible]! Now [illegible] M[illegible] is free [illegible] every man. [illegible]—Sir, what [illegible] you know?

M[illegible] From the public [illegible] the church.

P[illegible] J[illegible] W[illegible]

M[illegible] [illegible]

P[illegible] J[illegible] [illegible]

M[illegible] [illegible]

P[illegible] J[illegible] [illegible]

M[illegible] [illegible] Duke's [illegible]

P[illegible] J[illegible] But what's [illegible] still.

M[illegible] Commonness? [illegible]

1 *[illegible]*

I[illegible] Mr. K[illegible] Shakespeare [illegible] [illegible] I [illegible] W[illegible] T[illegible] [illegible] a plain [illegible]

blush. What would seem gross allusions to us at present, were without offence to our ancestors, and many things passed for jests with them, or matters of indifference, which would not now be endured. Refinement of language, however, does not keep pace with simplicity of manners. The severity of criticism exercised in our theatres towards some unfortunate straggling phrases in the old comedies, is but an ambiguous compliment to the immaculate purity of modern times. Marston's style was by no means more guarded than that of his contemporaries. He was also much more of a free-thinker than Marlowe, and there is a frequent and not unfavourable allusion, in his works, to later sceptical opinions. In the play of the 'Malcontent' we meet with an occasional mixture of comic gaiety, to relieve the more serious and painful business of the scene, as in the easy loquacious effrontery of the old *intriguante* Maquerella, and in the ludicrous facility with which the idle courtiers avoid or seek the notice of Malevole, as he is in or out of favour; but the general tone and import of the piece is severe and moral. The plot is somewhat too intricate and too often changed (like the shifting of a scene,) so as to break and fritter away the interest at the end; but the part of Aurelia, the Duchess of Pietro Jacomo, a dissolute and proud-spirited woman, is the highest strain of Marston's pen. The scene in particular, in which she receives and exults in the supposed news of her husband's death, is nearly unequalled in boldness of conception and in the unrestrained force of passion, taking away not only the consciousness of guilt, but overcoming the sense of shame.*

Next to Marston, I must put Chapman, whose name is better known as the translator of Homer than as a dramatic writer. He is, like Marston, a philosophic observer, a didactic reasoner: but he has both more gravity in his tragic style, and more levity in his comic vein. His 'Bussy d'Ambois,' though not without interest or some fancy, is rather a collection of apophthegms or pointed sayings in the form of a dialogue, than a poem or a tragedy. In his verses the oracles have not ceased. Every other line is an axiom in morals—a libel on mankind, if truth is

* See conclusion of Lecture IV

a libel. He is too stately for a wit in his serious writings—too formal for a poet. 'Bussy d'Ambois' is founded on a French plot and French manners. The character, from which it derives its name, is arrogant and ostentatious to an unheard-of degree, but full of nobleness and lofty spirit. His pride and unbounded pretensions alone take away from his real merit; and by the quarrels and intrigues in which they involve him, bring about the catastrophe, which has considerable grandeur and imposing effect, in the manner of Seneca. Our author aims at the highest things in poetry, and tries in vain, wanting imagination and passion, to fill up the epic moulds of tragedy with sense and reason alone, so that he often runs into bombast and turgidity—is extravagant and pedantic at one and the same time. From the nature of the plot, which turns upon a love intrigue, much of the philosophy of this piece relates to the character of the sex. Milton says—

"The way of women's will is hard to find."

But old Chapman professes to have found the clue to it, and winds his uncouth way through all the labyrinth of love. Its deepest recesses "hide nothing from his view." The close intrigues of court policy, the subtle workings of the human soul, [illegible]

about town, which we have in such perfection in Wycherly and Congreve, such as Sparkish, Witwoud, and Petulant, &c., both in the sentiments and in the style of writing. For example, take the last scene of the first act.

Enter D'OLIVE.

Rhoderique. What, Monsieur D'Olive, the only admirer of wit and good words.

D'Olive. Morrow, wits: morrow, good wits: my little parcels of wit, I have rods in pickle for you. How dost, Jack; may I call thee, sir, Jack yet?

Mugeron. You may, sir; sir's as commendable an addition as Jack, for aught I know.

D'Ol. I know it, Jack, and as common too.

Rhod. Go to, you may cover; we have taken notice of your embroidered beaver.

D'Ol. Look you: by heaven thou'rt one of the maddest bitter slaves in Europe: I do but wonder how I made shift to love thee all this while

Rhod. Go to, what might such a parcel-gilt cover be worth?

Mug. Perhaps more than the whole piece beside.

D'Ol. Good i'faith, but bitter. Oh, you mad slaves, I think you had Satyrs to your sires, yet I must love you, I must take pleasure in you, and i'faith tell me, how is't? live I see you do, but how? but how, wits?

Rhod. 'Faith, as you see, like poor younger brothers.

D'Ol. By your wits?

Mug. Nay, not turned poets, neither.

D'Ol. Good in sooth! But indeed, to say truth, time was when the sons of the Muses had the privilege to live only by their wits, but times are altered monopolies are now called in, and wit's become a free trade for all sorts to live by: lawyers live by wit, and they live worshipfully: soldiers live by wit, and they live honourably: panders live by wit, and they live honestly: in a word, there are but few trades but live by wit, only bawds and midwives by woman's labours, as fools and fiddlers do making mirth, pages and parasites by making legs, painters and players by making mouths and faces: ha, does't well, wits?

Rhod. 'Faith, thou followest a figure in thy jests, as country gentlemen follow fashions, when they be worn threadbare.

D'Ol. Well, well, let's leave these wit skirmishes, and say when shall we meet?

Mug. How think you, are we not met now?

D'Ol. Tush, man! I mean at my chamber, where we may make free use of ourselves; that is, drink sack, and talk satire, and let our wits run the wild-goose chase over court and country. I will have my chamber the rendezvous of all good wits, the shop of good words, the mint of good jests, an ordinary of fine discourse; critics, essayists, linguists, poets, and other professors of

that family of wit shall at certain hours o' th' day resort thither; it shall be a second Sorbonne, where all doubts or differences of learning, honour, duellism, criticism, and poetry, shall be disputed: and how, I pray, sits the wind now?

Rh. Close at the back, sir, and I can tell you, you have much to answer to your stars that you do not so too.

D'Ol. As why, I pray, as why?

Rh. Why, sir, the court's as 'twere the stage: and they that have a good suit of parts and qualities, ought to press thither to grace them, and receive their due merit.

D'Ol. Tush, let the court follow me: he that soars too near the sun, melts his wings many times; as I am, I possess myself, I enjoy my liberty, my learning, my wit; as for wealth and honour, let 'em go; I'll not lose my learning to be a lord, nor my wit to be an alderman.

Mug. Admirable D'Olive!

D'Ol. And what! you stand gazing at this comet here, and admire it, I dare say.

Rh. And do not you?

D'Ol. Not I, I admire nothing but wit.

Rh. But I wonder how she entertains time in that solitary cell: does she not take tobacco, think you?

D'Ol. She does, she does: others make it their physic, she makes it her food: her sister and she take it by turn, first one, then the other, and Vandome ministers to them both.

Mug. How say you to that Helen of Greece, the Countess's sister? there were a paragon, Monsieur D'Olive, to admire and marry too.

D'Ol. Not for me.

Rh. No, what exceptions [illegible] choice?

D'Ol. [illegible] I would choose my wife as men do valentines, blindfold or draw cuts for them, for so [illegible]

Mug. [illegible]

D'Ol. [illegible]

Rh. [illegible]

Mug. We must have you dubb'd o' th' order; there's no remedy: you that have, unmarried, done such honourable service in the commonwealth, must needs receive the honour due to 't in marriage.

Rhod. That he may do, and never marry.

D'Ol. As how, wits? I'faith as how?

Rhod. For if he can prove his father was free o' th' order, and that he was his father's son, then, by the laudable custom of the city, he may be a cuckold by his father's copy, and never serve for 't.

D'Ol. Ever good, i'faith!

Mug. Nay, how can he plead that, when 'tis as well known his father died a bachelor?

D'Ol. Bitter, in verity, bitter! But good still in its kind.

Rhod. Go to, we must have you follow the lantern of your forefathers.

Mug. His forefathers? 'Sbody, had he more fathers than one?

D'Ol. Why, this is right: here's wit canvast out on 's coat, into 's jacket: the string sounds ever well, that rubs not too much o' th' frets: I must love you, wits, I must take pleasure in you. Farewell, good wits: you know my lodging, make an errand thither now and then, and save your ordinary; do, wits, do.

Mug. We shall be troublesome t' ye.

D'Ol. O God, sir, you wrong me, to think I can be troubled with wit: I love a good wit as I love myself: if you need a brace or two of crowns at any time, address but your sonnet, it shall be as sufficient as your bond at all times: I carry half a score birds in a cage, shall ever remain at your call. Farewell, wits; farewell, good wits. [*Exit.*

Rhod. Farewell, the true map of a gull: by heaven he shall to th' court! 'tis the perfect model of an impudent upstart; the compound of a poet and a lawyer; he shall sure to th' court.

Mug. Nay, for God's sake, let's have no fools at court.

Rhod. He shall to 't, that 's certain. The duke had a purpose to dispatch some one or other to the French king, to entreat him to send for the body of his niece, which the melancholy Earl of St. Anne, her husband, hath kept so long unburied, as meaning one grave should entomb himself and her together.

Mug. A very worthy subject for an embassage, as D'Olive is for an ambassador agent; and 'tis as suitable to his brain, as his parcel-gilt beaver to his fool's head.

Rhod. Well, it shall go hard, but he shall be employed. Oh, 'tis a most accomplished ass; the mongrel of a gull, and a villain: the very essence of his soul is pure villany; the substance of his brain, foolery; one that believes nothing from the stars upward; a pagan in belief, an epicure beyond belief; prodigious in lust; prodigal in wasteful expense; in necessary, most penurious. His wit is to admire and imitate; his grace is to censure and detract; he shall to th' court, i' faith he shall thither: I will shape such employment for him, as that he himself shall have no less contentment, in making mirth to the whole court, than the Duke and the whole court shall have pleasure in enjoying his presence. A knave, if he be rich, is fit to make an officer, as a fool, if he be a knave, is fit to make an intelligencer. [*Exeunt.*"

this last-mentioned worthy character; but the bargain between us is, I trust, for life. We sometimes regret that we had not sooner met with characters like these, that seem to raise, revive, and give a new zest to our being. Vain the complaint! We should never have known their value, if we had not known them always: they are old, very old acquaintance, or we should not recognize them at first sight. We only find in books what is already written within "the red-leaved tables of our hearts." The pregnant materials are there; "the pangs, the internal pangs are ready; and poor humanity's afflicted will struggling in vain with ruthless destiny." But the reading of fine poetry may indeed open the bleeding wounds, or pour balm and consolation into them, or sometimes even close them up for ever! Let any one who has never known cruel disappointment, nor comfortable hopes, read the first scene between Orlando and Hippolito, in Decker's play of the 'Honest Whore,' and he will see nothing in it. But I think few persons will be entirely proof against such passages as some of the following:

"*Enter* Orlando Friscobaldo.

Omnes. Signior Friscobaldo.

Hippolito. Friscobaldo, oh! pray call him, and leave me; we two have business.

Carolo. Ho, Signior! Signior Friscobaldo, the Lord Hippolito.

[*Exeunt.*

Orlando. My noble Lord! the Lord Hippolito! The Duke's son! his brave daughter's brave husband! How does your honour'd Lordship? Does your nobility remember so poor a gentleman as Signior Orlando Friscobaldo? old mad Orlando?

Hip. Oh, sir, our friends, they ought to be unto us as our jewels; as dearly valued, being locked up and unseen, as when we wear them in our hands. I see, Friscobaldo, age hath not command of your blood; for all Time's sickle hath gone over you, you are Orlando still.

Orl. Why, my Lord, are not the fields mown and cut down, and stript bare, and yet wear they not pied coats again? Though my head be like a leek, white, may not my heart be like the blade, green?

Hip. Scarce can I read the stories on your brow,
Which age hath writ there: you look youthful still.

Orl. I eat snakes, my Lord, I eat snakes. My heart shall never have a wrinkle in it so long as I can cry Hem! with a clear voice. * * *

Hip. You are the happier man, sir.

Orl. May not old Friscobaldo, my Lord, be merry now, ha? I have a

[illegible] I have no wife, I have no child, have no [illegible]

H. [illegible]

O. [illegible] years [illegible]

H. [illegible]

O. [illegible]

H. Then [illegible] I tell you what's become of it; that branch is withered.

O. [illegible]

H. Her name, I think, was Bellafront; she's dead.

O. [illegible]

H. [illegible] worth the keeping. Even in my sight, [illegible]

O. [illegible] as well as the daintiest. Is [illegible]

H. [illegible]

O. [illegible] Is she dead? [illegible] my sorrows, [illegible]

H. [illegible]

[illegible]

O. [illegible] Is she poor?

H. [illegible]

O. [illegible]

her [illegible]

Hip. I almost dare pawn my word her bosom gives warmth to no such snakes; when did you see her?

Orl. Not seventeen summers.

Hip. Is your hate so old?

Orl. Older; it has a white head, and shall never die till she be buried; her wrongs shall be my bedfellow.

Hip. Work yet his life, since in it lives her fame.

Orl. No, let him hang, and half her infamy departs out of the world; I hate him for her: he taught her first to taste poison; I hate her for herself, because she refused my physic.

Hip. Nay, but Friscobaldo.

Orl. I detest her, I defy both, she's not mine, she's——

Hip. Hear her, but speak.

Orl. I love no mermaids, I'll not be caught with a quail-pipe.

Hip. You're now beyond all reason. Is't dotage to relieve your child, being poor?

Orl. 'Tis foolery; relieve her! Were her cold limbs stretcht out upon a bier, I would not sell this dirt under my nails to buy her an hour's breath, nor give this hair unless it were to choke her.

Hip. Fare you well, for I'll trouble you no more. [*Exit.*

Orl. And fare you well, sir, go thy ways; we have few lords of thy making, that love wenches for their honesty.—'Las, my girl, art thou poor? Poverty dwells next door to despair, there's but a wall between them: despair is one of hell's catchpoles, and lest that devil arrest her, I'll to her; yet she shall not know me: she shall drink of my wealth as beggars do of running water, freely; yet never know from what fountain's head it flows. Shall a silly bird pick her own breast to nourish her young ones: and can a father see his child starve? That were hard: the pelican does it, and shall not I?"

The rest of the character is answerable to the beginning. The execution is, throughout, as exact as the conception is new and masterly. There is the least colour possible used; the pencil drags; the canvas is almost seen through: but then, what precision of outline, what truth and purity of tone, what firmness of hand, what marking of character! The words and answers all along are so true and pertinent, that we seem to see the gestures, and to hear the tone with which they are accompanied. So when Orlando, disguised, says to his daughter, "You'll forgive me," and she replies, "I am not marble, I forgive you;" or again, when she introduces him to her husband, saying simply, "It is my father," there needs no stage-direction to supply the relenting tones of voice or cordial frankness of manner with which these words are spoken. It is as if there were some fine art to chisel

[illegible] and to embody the [illegible] movements of the mind in every-day actions and familiar speech. It has been said, [illegible]

> [illegible]
> [illegible]

But this difficulty is here in a manner overcome. Simplicity and extravagance of style, homeliness and quaintness, tragedy and comedy, interchangeably set their hands and seals to this admirable production. We find the simplicity of prose with the graces of poetry. The stalk grows out of the ground; but the flowers spread their flaunting leaves in the air. The mixture of levity in the chief character bespeaks the bitterness from which it [illegible] [illegible] The story has all the romance of private life, all the pathos of [illegible] almost an ideal case. She gives the play its title, turns out a [illegible] the

pleadings on both sides, for and against female faith and constancy, are managed with great polemical skill, assisted by the grace and vividness of poetical illustration. As an instance of the manner in which Bellafront speaks of the miseries of her former situation, "and she has felt them knowingly," I might give the lines in which she contrasts the different regard shown to the modest or the abandoned of her sex:

> "I cannot, seeing she's woven of such bad stuff,
> Set colours on a harlot bad enough.
> Nothing did make me when I lov'd them best,
> To loath them more than this: when in the street
> A fair, young, modest damsel, I did meet,
> She seem'd to all a dove, when I pass'd by
> And I to all a raven: every eye
> That followed her, went with a bashful glance;
> At me each bold and jeering countenance
> Darted forth scorn: to her, as if she had been
> Some tower unvanquished, would they vail;
> 'Gainst me swoln rumour hoisted every sail.
> She crown'd with reverend praises, passed by them;
> I, though with face mask'd, could not 'scape the hem;
> For, as if heav'n had set strange marks on whores,
> Because they should be pointing-stocks to man,
> Drest up in civilest shape, a courtesan,
> Let her walk saint-like, noteless, and unknown,
> Yet she's betray'd by some trick of her own."

Perhaps this sort of appeal to matter of fact and popular opinion, is more convincing than the scholastic subtleties of the Lady in 'Comus.' The manner too, in which Infelice, the wife of Hippolito, is made acquainted with her husband's infidelity, is finely dramatic; and in the scene where she convicts him of his injustice by taxing herself with incontinence first, and then turning his most galling reproaches to her into upbraidings against his own conduct, she acquits herself with infinite spirit and address. The contrivance by which, in the first part, after being supposed dead, she is restored to life, and married to Hippolito, though perhaps a little far-fetched, is affecting and romantic. There is uncommon beauty in the Duke her father's description of her sudden illness. In reply to Infelice's declaration on reviving, "I'm well," he says,

> "That were to use [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]

Candid [illegible] character-sketch of this play is a chronicle of the irrevocable quaintness and solidarity. His patience, his good-humour cannot be disturbed by anything. The old quarrel is nothing but an old bear is a dull one, and is well supported. He is not only resigned to injuries, but "turns them," as Falstaff says of diseases, "into commodities." He is a patient Grizzel out of petticoats, or a Petruchio reversed. He is as determined upon wedding to affronts, and keeping out of scrapes or adventures, as the hero of the "Taming of the Shrew" is intent upon picking quarrels out of straws, and signalizing his manhood without the smallest provocation to do so. The sudden turn of the character of Cleon [illegible] second marriage, is however as amusing as it is unexpected.

Malvolio, "the lightly-living" lieutenant of Beaufort, is a masterly portrait, done with equal ease and effect. He is a person almost without a conscience, that is, he is in a state of nature without any moral principle at all. He has no malice against others, and [illegible] He is gay, profligate, and unprincipled [illegible] He exposes himself to [illegible] He [illegible] "Do we merely live?" is an answer to all arguments. Put him to any serious test, has no more effect upon him, than upon the moth that flies into the candle. He is only to be left to his fate. Orlando saves him from it, as we do the moth, by snatching it out of the flame, [illegible] and putting down the casement upon it.

We [illegible] Dekker's [illegible] and Decker [illegible] and [illegible] Webster [illegible] We have [illegible] shades of [illegible] much

they lose some colour," is, that they are too like Shakspeare, and often direct imitations of him, both in general conception and individual expression. So far, there is nobody else whom it would be either so difficult or so desirable to imitate; but it would have been still better, if all his characters had been entirely his own, had stood out as much from others, resting only on their own naked merits, as that of the honest Hidalgo, on whose praises I have dwelt so much above. Decker has, I think, more truth of character, more instinctive depth of sentiment, more of the unconscious simplicity of nature; but he does not, out of his own stores, clothe his subject with the same richness of imagination, or the same glowing colours of language. Decker excels in giving expression to habitual, deeply-rooted feelings, which remain pretty much the same in all circumstances, the simple uncompounded elements of nature and passion:—Webster gives more scope to their various combinations and changeable aspects, brings them into dramatic play by contrast and comparison, flings them into a state of fusion by a kindled fancy, makes them describe a wider arc of oscillation from the impulse of unbridled passion, and carries both terror and pity to a more painful and sometimes unwarrantable excess. Decker is contented with the historic picture of suffering; Webster goes on to suggest horrible imaginings. The pathos of the one tells home and for itself; the other adorns his sentiments with some image of tender or awful beauty. In a word, Decker is more like Chaucer or Boccaccio; as Webster's mind appears to have been cast more in the mould of Shakspeare's, as well naturally as from studious emulation. The Bellafront and Vittoria Corombona of these two excellent writers, show their different powers and turn of mind. The one is all softness; the other "all fire and air." The faithful wife of Matheo sits at home drooping, "like the female dove, the whilst her golden couplets are disclosed;" while the insulted and persecuted Victoria darts killing scorn and pernicious beauty at her enemies. This White Devil (as she is called) is made fair as the leprosy, dazzling as the lightning. She is dressed like a bride in her wrongs and her revenge. In the trial scene in particular, her sudden indignant answers to the questions that are asked her, startle the

[illegible] appears. [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Flam. Nothing; of nothing: leave thy idle questions—
I am i' th' way to study a long silence.
To prate were idle: I remember nothing;
There's nothing of so infinite vexation
As man's own thoughts.
Lod. O thou glorious strumpet!
Could I divide thy breath from this pure air
When 't leaves thy body, I would suck it up,
And breathe 't upon some dunghill.
Vit. Cor. You my death's-man.
Methinks thou dost not look horrid enough;
Thou hast too good a face to be a hangman:
If thou be, do thy office in right form;
Fall down upon thy knees, and ask forgiveness.
Lod. O! thou hast been a most prodigious comet;
But I'll cut off your train: kill the Moor first.
Vit. Cor. You shall not kill her first; behold my breast;
I will be waited on in death: my servant
Shall never go before me.
Gasp. Are you so brave?
Vit. Cor. Yes, I shall welcome death
As princes do some great embassadours;
I'll meet thy weapon half way.
Lod. Thou dost not tremble!
Methinks, fear should dissolve thee into air.
Vit. Cor. O, thou art deceived, I am too true a woman:
Conceit can never kill me. I'll tell thee what,
I will not in my death shed one base tear
Or if look pale, for want of blood, not fear.
Gasp. (*to* Zanche). Thou art my task, black fury.
Zanche. I have blood
As red as either of theirs! Wilt drink some?
'Tis good for the falling sickness: I am proud
Death cannot alter my complexion,
For I shall ne'er look pale.
Lod. Strike, strike,
With a joint motion.
Vit. Cor. 'Twas a manly blow:
The next thou givest, murther some sucking infant,
And then thou wilt be famous."

Such are some of the *terrible graces* of the obscure, forgotten Webster. There are other parts of this play of a less violent, more subdued, and, if it were possible, even deeper character; such is the declaration of divorce pronounced by Brachiano on his wife:

Your hand I [illegible] kiss [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

which [illegible] Decker's finest things: [illegible] in a quite different style [illegible] such as the [illegible] the death of Marcello and the [illegible] of Brachiano; which would be as fine as Shakespeare [illegible] not in a great measure [illegible] well from [illegible]. [illegible], after Flamineo has stabbed his brother and [illegible] Cornelia exclaims.

[illegible]

Half of thyself lies there; and may'st thou live
To fill an hour-glass with his moulder'd ashes,
To tell how thou should'st spend the time to come
In b.est repentance.
Brach. Mother, pray tell me,
How came he by his death? What was the quarrel?
Corn. Indeed, my younger boy presumed too much
Upon his manhood, gave him bitter words,
Drew his sword first; and so, I know not how,
For I was out of my wits, he fell with 's head
Just in my bosom.
Page. This is not true, madam.
Corn. I pr'ythee, peace.
One arrow's graz'd already: it were vain
To lose this; for that will ne'er be found again."

This is a good deal borrowed from Lear; but the inmost folds of the human heart, the sudden turns and windings of the fondest affection, are also laid open with so masterly and original a hand, that it seems to prove the occasional imitations as unnecessary as they are evident. The scene where the Duke discovers that he is poisoned, is as follows, and equally fine:

"*Brach.* Oh! I am gone already. The infection
Flies to the brain and heart. O, thou strong heart,
There's such a covenant 'tween the world and thee,
They're loth to part.
Giovanni. O my most lov'd father!
Brach. Remove the boy away:
Where's this good woman? Had I infinite worlds,
They were too little for thee. Must I leave thee? (*To* Vittoria.)
What say you, screech-owls? (*To the Physicians.*) Is the venom mortal?
Phy. Most deadly.
Brach. Most corrupted politic hangman!
You kill without book; but your art to save
Fails you as oft as great men's needy friends:
I that have given life to offending slaves,
And wretched murderers, have I not power
To lengthen mine own a twelve-month?
Do not kiss me, for I shall poison thee.
This unction is sent from the great Duke of Florence.
Francesco de Medici (in disguise). Sir, be of comfort.
Brach. O thou soft natural death! that art joint-twin
To sweetest slumber!—no rough-bearded comet
Stares on thy mild departure: the dull owl

[illegible]

Third captain praises Lodovico and Gasparo, who offer up the sacrament to the daughter of Monsieur, and then discover themselves [illegible] Fourth and fifth captains. Before the [illegible] was performed as it was duly. When this was ended Antonio says,

[illegible]

To which Vittoria answers,

[illegible]

[illegible]

or meliorate the heart. I speak this under correction; but I hope the objection is a venial common-place. In a different style altogether are the directions she gives about her children in her last struggles·

> "I pr'ythee, look thou giv'st my little boy
> Some syrop for his cold, and let the girl
> Say her pray'rs ere she sleep. Now what death you please—"

and her last word, "Mercy," which she recovers just strength enough to pronounce; her proud answer to her tormentors, who taunt her with her degradation and misery—"But I am Duchess of Malfy still"*—as if the heart rose up, like a serpent coiled, to resent the indignities put upon it, and being struck at, struck again; and the staggering reflection her brother makes on her death, "Cover her face: my eyes dazzle: she died young!" Bosola replies:

> "I think not so; her infelicity
> Seem'd to have years too many.
> *Ferdinand.* She and I were twins.
> And should I die this instant, I had liv'd
> Her time to a minute."

This is not the bandying of idle words and rhetorical common-places, but the writhing and conflict, and the sublime colloquy of man's nature with itself!

The 'Revenger's Tragedy,' by Cyril Tourneur, is the only other drama equal to these and to Shakspeare, in "the dazzling fence of impassioned argument," in pregnant illustration, and in those profound reaches of thought which lay open the soul of feeling. The play, on the whole, does not answer to the expectations it excites; but the appeals of Castiza to her mother, who endeavours to corrupt her virtuous resolutions, "Mother, come

* "Am I not the Duchess?

Bosola. Thou art some great woman, sure; for riot begins to sit on thy forehead (clad in grey hairs) twenty years sooner than on a merry milkmaid's. Thou sleep'st worse than if a mouse should be forced to take up his lodging in a cat's ear: a little infant that breeds its teeth, should it lie with thee, would cry out, as if thou wert the more unquiet bed-fellow.

Duch. I am Duchess of Malfy still."

from that poisonous woman there," with others of the same kind, are of as high and abstracted an essence of poetry, as any of those above mentioned.

In short, the great characteristic of the elder dramatic writers is, that there is nothing theatrical about them. In reading them you only think how the persons, into whose mouths certain sentiments are put, would have spoken or looked: in reading Dryden and others of that school, you only think, as the authors themselves seem to have done, how they would be ranted on the stage by some buskined hero or tragedy queen. In this respect, indeed, some of his more obscure contemporaries have the advantage over Shakspeare himself, inasmuch as we have never seen their works represented on the stage; and there is no stage-trick to remind us of them. [illegible] have we ever seen [illegible] I do not mean to speak disparagingly of the stage; but I think higher still of nature, and next to that of books. They are the nearest to our thoughts: they wind into the heart; the poet's verse slides into [illegible]. We read them when young, we remember them when old. We read there of what has happened to others; we feel that it has happened to ourselves. They are to be had everywhere cheap and good. We [illegible]

with Signor Orlando Friscobaldo, as the oldest acquaintance I have. Ben Jonson, learned Chapman, Master Webster, and Master Heywood, are there; and seated round, discourse the silent hours away. Shakspeare is there himself, not in Cibber's manager's coat. Spenser is hardly yet returned from a ramble through the woods, or is concealed behind a group of nymphs, fawns, and satyrs. Milton lies on the table, as on an altar, never taken up or laid down without reverence. Lyly's Endymion sleeps with the Moon, that shines in at the window; and a breath of wind stirring at a distance seems a sigh from the tree under which he grew old. Faustus disputes in one corner of the room with fiendish faces, and reasons of divine astrology. Bellafront soothes Matheo, Vittoria triumphs over her judges, and old Chapman repeats one of the hymns of Homer, in his own fine translation! I should have no objection to pass my life in this manner out of the world, not thinking of it, nor it of me; neither abused by my enemies, nor defended by my friends; careless of the future, but sometimes dreaming of the past, which might as well be forgotten! Mr. Wordsworth has expressed this sentiment well (perhaps I have borrowed it from him)—

> "Books, dreams, are both a world; and books, we know,
> Are a substantial world, both pure and good,
> Round which, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
> Our pastime and our happiness may grow.
> * * * * * *
> Two let me mention dearer than the rest,
> The gentle lady wedded to the Moor,
> And heavenly Una with her milk-white lamb.
>
> Blessings be with them and eternal praise,
> The poets, who on earth have made us heirs
> Of truth and pure delight in deathless lays.
> Oh, might my name be number'd among theirs,
> Then gladly would I end my mortal days!"

I have no sort of pretension to join in the concluding wish of the last stanza; but I trust the writer feels that this aspiration of his early and highest ambition is already not unfulfilled!

LECTURE IV.

On Beaumont and Fletcher—Ben Jonson—Ford—and Massinger.

beauty dissolving in its own sweetness. They are like heirs just come to their estates, like lovers in the honey-moon. In the economy of nature's gifts they "misuse the bounteous Pan, and thank the Gods amiss." Their productions shoot up in haste, but bear the marks of precocity and premature decay. Or they are two goodly trees, the stateliest of the forest, crowned with blossoms, and with the verdure springing at their feet; but they do not strike their roots far enough into the ground, and the fruit can hardly ripen for the flowers!

It cannot be denied that they are lyrical and descriptive poets of the highest order; every page of their writings is a *florilegium:* they are dramatic poets of the second class, in point of knowledge, variety, vivacity, and effect; there is hardly a passion, character, or situation, which they have not touched in their devious range, and whatever they touched they adorned with some new grace or striking feature: they are masters of style and versification in almost every variety of melting modulation or sounding pomp, of which they are capable: in comic wit and spirit, they are scarcely surpassed by any writers of any age. There they are in their element, "like eagles newly baited;" but I speak rather of their serious poetry; and this, I apprehend, with all its richness, sweetness, loftiness, and grace, wants something—stimulates more than it gratifies, and leaves the mind in a certain sense exhausted and unsatisfied. Their fault is a too ostentatious and indiscriminate display of power. Everything seems in a state of fermentation and effervescence, and not to have settled and found its centre in their minds. The ornaments, through neglect or abundance, do not always appear sufficiently appropriate: there is evidently a rich wardrobe of words and images, to set off any sentiments that occur, but not equal felicity in the choice of the sentiments to be expressed; the characters in general do not take a substantial form, or excite a growing interest, or leave a permanent impression; the passion does not accumulate by the force of time, of circumstances, and habit, but wastes itself in the first ebullitions of surprise and novelty.

Besides these more critical objections, there is a too frequent mixture of voluptuous softness or effeminacy of character with horror in the subjects, a conscious weakness (I can hardly think

gions. Of the latter class were our poets, who, I believe, led unexceptionable lives, and only indulged their imaginations in occasional unwarrantable liberties with the Muses. What makes them more inexcusable, and confirms this charge against them, is, that they are always abusing "wanton poets," as if willing to shift suspicion from themselves.

Beaumont and Fletcher were the first, also, who laid the foundation of the artificial diction and tinselled pomp of the next generation of poets, by aiming at a profusion of ambitious ornaments, and by translating the commonest circumstances into the language of metaphor and passion. It is this misplaced and inordinate craving after striking effect and continual excitement that had at one time rendered our poetry the most vapid of all things, by not leaving the moulds of poetic diction to be filled up by the overflowings of nature and passion, but by swelling out ordinary and unmeaning topics to certain preconceived and indispensable standards of poetical elevation and grandeur.—I shall endeavour to confirm this praise, mixed with unwilling blame, by remarking on a few of their principal tragedies. If I have done them injustice, the resplendent passages I have to quote will set everything to rights.

The 'Maid's Tragedy' is one of the poorest. The nature of the distress is of the most disagreeable and repulsive kind; and not the less so because it is entirely improbable and uncalled for. There is no sort of reason, or no sufficient reason to the reader's mind, why the king should marry off his mistress to one of his courtiers, why he should pitch upon the worthiest for this purpose, why he should, by such a choice, break off Amintor's match with the sister of another principal support of his throne (whose death is the consequence), why he should insist on the inviolable fidelity of his former mistress to him after she is married, and why her husband should thus inevitably be made acquainted with his dishonour, and roused to madness and revenge, except the mere love of mischief and gratuitous delight in torturing the feelings of others, and tempting one's own fate. The character of Evadne, however, her naked, unblushing impudence, the mixture of folly with vice, her utter insensibility to any motive but her own pride and inclination, her heroic su-

descending kindness; and perhaps this display of upstart pride was meant by the authors as an oblique satire on his low origin, which is afterwards discovered. His pride of self will and fierce impetuosity are the same in war and in love. The haughty voluptuousness and pampered effeminacy of his character admit neither respect for his misfortunes, nor pity for his errors. His ambition is a fever in the blood; and his love is a sudden transport of ungovernable caprice that brooks no restraint, and is intoxicated with the lust of power, even in the lap of pleasure, and the sanctuary of the affections. The passion of Panthea is, as it were, a reflection from, and lighted at the shrine of her lover's flagrant vanity. In the elevation of his rank, and in the consciousness of his personal accomplishments, he seems firmly persuaded (and by sympathy to persuade others) that there is nothing in the world which can be an object of liking or admiration but himself. The first birth and declaration of this perverted sentiment to himself, when he meets with Panthea after his return from conquest, fostered by his presumptuous infatuation and the heat of his inflammable passions, and the fierce and lordly tone in which he repels the suggestion of the natural obstacles to his sudden phrenzy, are in Beaumont and Fletcher's most daring manner; but the rest is not equal. What may be called the love scenes are equally gross and common-place; and instead of any thing like delicacy or a struggle of different feelings, have all the indecency and familiarity of a brothel. Bessus, a comic character in this play, is a swaggering coward, something between Parolles and Falstaff.

The 'False One' is an indirect imitation of Antony and Cleopatra. We have Septimius for Œnobarbus, and Cæsar for Antony. Cleopatra herself is represented in her girlish state, but she is made divine in

"Youth that opens like perpetual spring,"

and promises the rich harvest of love and pleasure that succeeds it. Her first presenting herself before Cæsar, when she is brought in by Sceva, and the impression she makes upon him, like a vision dropped from the clouds, or

"Like some celestial sweetness, the treasure of soft love,"

are exquisitely conceived. Photinus is an accomplished villain well-read in crooked policy and quirks of state; and the description of Pompey has a solemnity and grandeur worthy of his unfortunate end. Septimius says, bringing in his lifeless head,

"'Tis here, 'tis done! Behold, you fearful viewers,
Shake, and behold the model of the world here,
The pride and strength! Look, look again, 'tis finished!
That that whole armies, nay, whole nations,
Many and mighty kings, have been struck blind at,
And fled before, wing'd with their fears and terrors,
That steel War waited on, and Fortune courted,
That high-plum'd Honour built up for her own;
Behold that mightiness, behold that fierceness,
Behold that child of war, with all his glories,
By this poor hand made breathless!"

And again Cæsar says of him, who was his mortal enemy (it was not held in the fashion in those days, nor will it be held so in time to come, to lampoon those whom you have vanquished)—

"O thou conqueror,
Thou glory of the world once, now the pity:
Thou awe of nations, wherefore didst thou fall thus?
What poor fate followed thee, and pluck'd thee on
To trust thy sacred life to an Egyptian?
The life and light of Rome to a blind stranger,
That honourable war ne'er taught a nobleness,
Nor worthy circumstance shew'd what a man was?
That never heard thy name sung but in banquets,
And loose lascivious pleasures? to a boy,
That had no faith to comprehend thy greatness,
No study of thy life to know thy goodness?
Egyptians, dare you think your highest pyramids,
Built to out-dure the sun, as you suppose,
Where your unworthy kings lie rak'd in ashes,
Are monuments fit for him! No, brood of Nilus,
Nothing can cover his high fame but heaven;
No pyramids set off his memories,
But the eternal substance of his greatness;
To which I leave him."

It is something worth living for, to write or even read such poetry as this, or to know that it has been written, or that there have been subjects on which it could be written. Beaumont

and Fletcher's plays, comes the nearest in style and manner to Shakspeare, not excepting the first act of the 'Two Noble Kinsmen,' which has been sometimes attributed to him.

The 'Faithful Shepherdess,' by Fletcher alone, is "a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets, where no crude surfeit reigns." The author has in it given a loose to his fancy, and his fancy was his most delightful and genial quality, where, to use his own words,

> "He takes most ease, and grows ambitious
> Thro' his own wanton fire and pride delicious."

The songs and lyrical descriptions throughout are luxuriant and delicate in a high degree. He came near to Spenser in a certain tender and voluptuous sense of natural beauty; he came near to Shakspeare in the playful and fantastic expression of it. The whole composition is an exquisite union of dramatic and pastoral poetry; where the local descriptions receive a tincture from the sentiments and purposes of the speaker, and each character, cradled in the lap of nature, paints "her virgin fancies wild" with romantic grace and classic elegance.

The place and its employments are thus described by Chloe to Theno:

> ——— "Here be woods as green
> As any, air likewise as fresh and sweet
> As where smooth Zephyrus plays on the fleet
> Face of the curled stream, with flow'rs as many
> As the young spring gives, and as choice as any;
> Here be all new delights, cool streams and wells,
> Arbours o'ergrown with woodbine; caves, and dells
> Chuse where thou wilt, while I sit by and sing,
> Or gather rushes, to make many a ring
> For thy long fingers; tell thee tales of love,
> How the pale Phœbe, hunting in a grove,
> First saw the boy Endymion, from whose eyes
> She took eternal fire that never dies;
> How she conveyed him softly in a sleep,
> His temples bound with poppy, to the steep
> Head of old Latmos, where she stoops each night,
> Gilding the mountain with her brother's light,
> To kiss her sweetest."

There are few things that can surpass in truth and beauty of allegorical description the invocation of Amaryllis to the God of Shepherds, Pan, to save her from the violence of the Sullen Shepherd, for Syrinx's sake:

> —— For her dear sake,
> That loves the rivers' banks and their sweet shake
> In cold remembrance of my quick pursuit."

Or again, the friendly Satyr promises Clorin—

> "By glory of thine holy morning
> Any service within my dwelling
> I will do to woo Love's queen
> That can make a shadow of a scene
> Shadows grow on the green."

It would be a task not more difficult than this, to follow the flight of the poet's Muse, to contrast her floating graces, fluttering her green wings, and singing in the angelical of youth, of love, and joy!

There is only one artificial and unintuitive character in this entire, that of Thenot in love with Clorin. He is attached to her in the most fickle fidelity to her buried husband, and wishes her to grant his suit, lest she should put an end to his passion. Thus he pleads with her again and again:

> —— "If ever you have felt
> The force of love, or ever shall,
> Your own affection
> And your dear husband's love,
> If you would have
> Or Pan would
> He
> For
> With

The Sullen Shepherd [illegible] in love with Amaryllis, and in the

end, and gives a shock to the gentle and pleasing sentiments inspired throughout.

The resemblance of Comus to this poem is not so great as has been sometimes contended, nor are the particular allusions important or frequent. Whatever Milton copied, he made his own. In reading the Faithful Shepherdess, we find ourselves breathing the moonlight air under the cope of heaven, and wander by forest side or fountain, among fresh dews and flowers, following our vagrant fancies, or smit with the love of nature's works. In reading Milton's Comus, and most of his other works, we seem to be entering a lofty dome raised over our heads and ascending to the skies, and as if Nature and everything in it were but a temple and an image consecrated by the poet's art to the worship of virtue and true religion. The speech of Clorin, after she has been alarmed by the Satyr, is the only one of which Milton has made a free use:

> " And all my fears go with thee.
> What greatness or what private hidden power
> Is there in me to draw submission
> From this rude man and beast? Sure I am mortal:
> The daughter of a shepherd; he was mortal
> And she that bore me mortal; prick my hand,
> And it will bleed, a fever shakes me, and
> The self-same wind that makes the young lamb shrink,
> Makes me a-cold: my fear says, I am mortal.
> Yet I have heard (my mother told it me,
> And now I do believe it,) if I keep
> My virgin flow'r uncropt, pure, chaste, and fair.
> No goblin, wood-god, fairy, elf, or fiend,
> Satyr, or other power that haunts the groves,
> Shall hurt my body, or by vain illusion
> Draw me to wander after idle fires;
> Or voices calling me in dead of night
> To make me follow, and so tole me on
> Thro' mire and standing pools to find my ruin;
> Else, why should this rough thing, who never knew
> Manners, nor smooth humanity, whose heats
> Are rougher than himself, and more misshapen,
> Thus mildly kneel to me? Sure there's a pow'r
> In that great name of Virgin, that binds fast
> All rude uncivil bloods, all appetites
> That break their confines: ther strong Chastity!

> Be thou my sanctuary, and let it fall
> In expectation what thou art to be.'

Ben Jonson's 'Sad Shepherd' comes nearer it in style and spirit, but still with considerable differences, like the women, and with not any appearance of imitation. Ben's is more homely and grotesque. Fletcher's is more visionary and fantastical. I hardly know which to prefer. If Fletcher has the advantage in general power and sentiment, Jonson is superior in *nature* and truth of local colouring.

The 'Two Noble Kinsmen' is another monument of Fletcher's genius; and it is said also of Shakspeare's. The style of the first act has certainly more weight, more abruptness, and more invention, than the general style of Fletcher, with fewer sub-endings and illustrations to sheathe the end in progressive parts and prevent the disjointed fragments together. For example, the compliment of Theseus to one of the Queens, that Hercules

> 'Turn'd Hand who was accounted Neptune's heir
> And swore as strong a heart'

at sight of her beauty, is in a subtler and more masculine vein than Fletcher usually affected. Again, the supplicating address of the distressed Queen to Hippolita,

> 'Let [illegible]
> But [illegible]
> Thou [illegible]'

is certainly in better manner than Shakspeare would have written it. But, on the other hand, in what immediately follows, according to the representations of the scene, on the field of battle,

> 'Hear, ye [illegible]
> Stir [illegible]
> With [illegible]'

I think we perceive evidences of Beaumont and Fletcher, and of Fletcher's worst faults, in the midst of those which would have carried away the whole of Shakspeare's genius. The image of lust

and horror, not called for, and not at all proper in the mouth into which it is put. There is a studied exaggeration of the sentiment, and an evident imitation of the parenthetical interruptions and breaks in the line, corresponding to what we sometimes meet in Shakspeare, as in the speeches of Leontes in 'The Winter's Tale;' but the sentiment is overdone, and the style merely mechanical. Thus Hippolita declares, on her lord's going to the wars,

> "We have been soldiers, and we cannot weep,
> When our friends don their helms, or put to sea,
> Or tell of babes broach'd on the lance, or women
> That have seethed their infants in (and after eat them)
> The brine they wept at killing 'em; then if
> You stay to see of us such spinsters, we
> Should hold you here for ever."

One might apply to this sort of poetry what Marvel says of some sort of passions, that it is

> "Tearing our pleasures with rough strife
> Through the iron gates of life."

It is not in the true spirit of Shakspeare, who was "born only heir to all humanity," whose horrors were not gratuitous, and who did not harrow up the feelings for the sake of making mere *bravura* speeches. There are also in this first act several repetitions of Shakspeare's phraseology; a thing that seldom or never occurs in his own works. For instance:

> —— "Past slightly
> *His careless execution*"—
> "*The very lees* of such, millions of rates
> Exceed *the wine* of others"—
> "Let *the event*,
> That *never-erring arbitrator*, tell us"—
> "Like *old importment's bastard*."

There are also words that are never used by Shakspeare in a similar sense:—

> —— "All our surgeons
> *Convent* in their behoof"—
> "We *convent* nought else but woes."

in short, it appears to me that the first part of this play was written in imitation of Shakspeare's manner, but I scarcely can suppose that it was his, and I am sure it is not worthy of him. It seems to be by some writer of Shakspeare's time, who had great admiration for his predecessor, and who has imitated him with success in the scenes of Pericles, and the first act of Lear, and has produced a play which, if it had been Shakspeare's, would have been ranked among his most excellent productions. The conversation of Palamon and Arcite in prison is of this description, and the scene is evidently taken from that of Orsino, Viola, and Curio in 'Twelfth Night,' but filled up with a rich profusion of fancy that makes it less warm and

P. [illegible]
A. [illegible]
P. W[illegible]
Ar. [illegible] We are prisoners,
I [illegible]
A. [illegible]
We[illegible]
La[illegible]
P. O[illegible]
W[illegible] W[illegible]?
W[illegible] N[illegible]
M[illegible]
I[illegible]
P[illegible]
I[illegible] I[illegible]
V[illegible]
I[illegible] I[illegible] V[illegible]
I[illegible]
O[illegible]
I[illegible]
S[illegible]
O[illegible]
I[illegible] n[illegible]
B[illegible]
R[illegible]
V[illegible]
'[illegible]
T[illegible]
A. No[illegible]
T[illegible]
Ar[illegible]

Like a too timely spring: here age must find us,
And, which is heaviest, Palamon, unmarried;
The sweet embraces of a loving wife,
Loaden with kisses, arm'd with thousand Cupids,
Shall never clasp our necks! No issue know us,
No figures of ourselves shall we e'er see,
To glad our age, and like young eaglets teach 'em
Boldly to gaze against bright arms, and say,
Remember what your fathers were, and conquer!
The fair-eyed maids shall weep our banishments,
And in their songs curse ever-blinded fortune,
Till she for shame see what a wrong she has done
To youth and nature. This is all our world:
We shall know nothing here, but one another;
Hear nothing but the clock that tells our woes;
The vine shall grow, but we shall never see it:
Summer shall come, and with her all delights,
But dead-cold winter must inhabit here still.

Pal. 'Tis too true, Arcite! To our Theban hounds,
That shook the aged forest with their echoes,
No more now must we hallow; no more shake
Our pointed javelins, while the angry swine
Flies, like a Parthian quiver, from our rages,
Struck with our well-steel'd darts! All valiant uses
(The food and nourishment of noble minds)
In us two here shall perish; we shall die
(Which is the curse of honour) lazily,
Children of grief and ignorance.

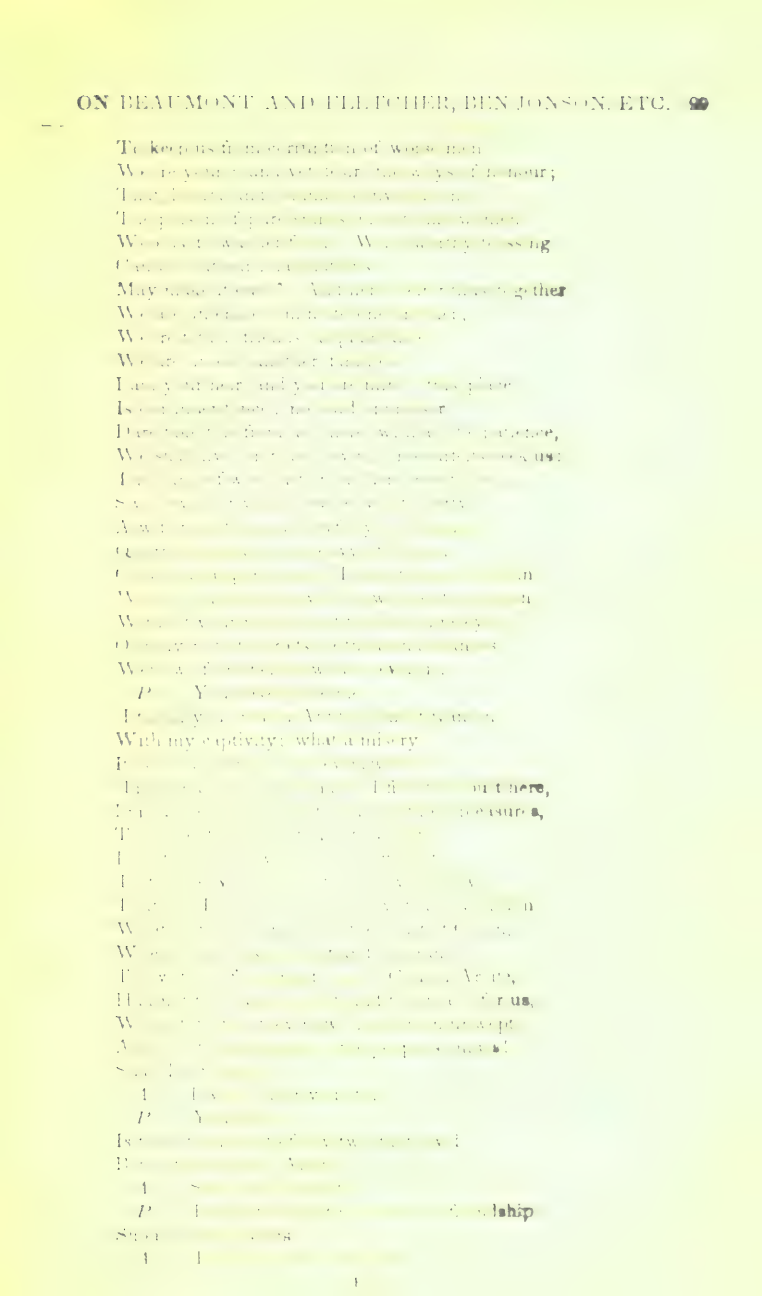
Arc. Yet, cousin,
Even from the bottom of these miseries,
From all that fortune can inflict upon us,
I see two comforts rising, two mere blessings,
If the gods please to hold here; a brave patience,
And the enjoying of our griefs together.
Whilst Palamon is with me, let me perish
If I think this our prison!

Pal. Certainly,
'Tis a main goodness, cousin, that our fortunes
Were twinn'd together; 'tis most true, two souls
Put in two noble bodies, let 'em suffer
The gall of hazard, so they grow together,
Will never sink; they must not, say they could;
A willing man dies sleeping, and all's done.

Arc. Shall we make worthy uses of this place
That all men hate so much?

Pal. How, gentle cousin?

Arc. Let's think this prison a holy sanctuary



Thus they "sing their bondage freely;" but just then enters Æmilia, who parts all this friendship between them, and turns them to deadliest foes.

The jailor's daughter, who falls in love with Palamon, and goes mad, is a wretched interpolation in the story, and a fantastic copy of Ophelia. But they readily availed themselves of all the dramatic common-places to be found in Shakspeare,—love, madness, processions, sports, imprisonment, &c., and copied him too often in earnest, to have a right to parody him, as they sometimes did, in jest. The story of 'The Two Noble Kinsmen' is taken from Chaucer's 'Palamon and Arcite;' but the latter part, which in Chaucer is full of dramatic power and interest, degenerates in the play into a mere narrative of the principal events, and possesses little value or effect. It is not improbable that Beaumont and Fletcher's having dramatized this story, put Dryden upon modernizing it.

I cannot go through all Beaumont and Fletcher's dramas (52 in number), but I have mentioned some of the principal, and the excellences and defects of the rest may be judged of from these. 'The Bloody Brother', 'A Wife for a Month,' 'Bonduca,' 'Thierry and Theodoret,' are among the best of their tragedies: among the comedies, 'The Night Walker,' 'The Little French Lawyer,' and 'Monsieur Thomas,' come perhaps next to 'The Chances,' 'The Wild Goose Chase,' and 'Rule a Wife and Have a Wife.'—'Philaster, or, Love Lies a-Bleeding,' is one of the most admirable productions of these authors (the last I shall mention); and the patience of Euphrasia, disguised as Bellario, the tenderness of Arethusa, and the jealousy of Philaster, are beyond all praise. The passages of extreme romantic beauty and high-wrought passion that I might quote are out of number. One only must suffice, the account of the commencement of Euphrasia's love to Philaster:

> ——"Sitting in my window,
> Printing my thought in lawn, I saw a God
> I thought (but it was you) enter our gates;
> My blood flew out, and back again as fast
> As I had puffed it forth and suck'd it in
> Like breath; then was I called away in haste
> To entertain you. Never was a man

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

And [illegible] "I [illegible] with [illegible] as well as we [illegible]":

> "I loved [illegible]
> And will [illegible]
> Less [illegible]"

Ben Jonson's [illegible] Beaumont and Fletcher [illegible] to [illegible] Webster [illegible] Middleton [illegible] Heywood [illegible] Marston [illegible] Chapman [illegible] Dekker [illegible] Jonson [illegible] Heywood [illegible] Jonson [illegible] Beaumont [illegible] Fletcher

ject, by ponderous machinery. By dint of application, and a certain strength of nerve, he could do justice to Tacitus and Sallust no less than to mine host of the New Inn. His tragedy of 'The Fall of Sejanus,' in particular, is an admirable piece of ancient mosaic. The principal character gives one the idea of a lofty column of solid granite, nodding to its base from its pernicious height, and dashed in pieces by a breath of air, a word of its creator—feared, not pitied, scorned, unwept, and forgotten. The depth of knowledge and gravity of expression sustain one another throughout: the poet has worked out the historian's outline, so that the vices and passions, the ambition and servility of public men, in the heated and poisoned atmosphere of a luxurious and despotic court, were never described in fuller or more glowing colours. I am half afraid to give any extracts, lest they should be tortured into an application to other times and characters than those referred to by the poet, Some of the sounds, indeed, may bear (for what I know) an awkward construction: some of the objects may look double to squint-eyed suspicion. But that is not my fault. It only proves that the characters of prophet and poet are implied in each other; that he who describes human nature well once, describes it for good and all, as it was, is, and, I begin to fear, will ever be. Truth always was, and must always remain, a libel to the tyrant and the slave. Thus Satrius Secundus and Pinnarius Natta, two public informers in those days, are described as

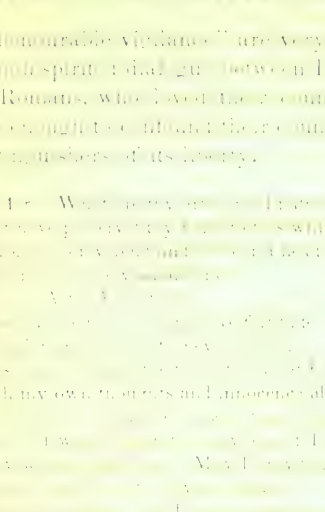
> "Two of Sejanus' blood-hounds, whom he breeds
> With human flesh, to bay at citizens."

But Rufus, another of the same well-bred gang, debating the point of his own character with two senators whom he has entrapped, boldly asserts, in a more courtly strain,

> —— "To be a spy on traitors
> Is honourable vigilance."

This sentiment of the respectability of the employment of a government spy, which had slept in Tacitus for near two thousand years, has not been without its modern patrons. The effects

of such "unmanagable virulence" are very finely expressed in the following high-spirited dialogue between Lepidus and Arruntius, two noble Romans, who loved their country, but were not unfashionable enough to conceal their contempt for its oppressors, and the extinguishers of its liberty.



"Thus, then, [illegible] the [illegible], the Roman's [illegible]

"[illegible] from [illegible] historic truth.

How blest a fate were it to us, and Rome?
Men are deceived, who think there can be thrall
Under a virtuous prince. Wish'd liberty
Ne'er lovelier looks than under such a crown.
But when his grace is merely but lip-good,
And that, no longer than he airs himself
Abroad in public, there to seem to shun
The strokes and stripes of flatterers, which within
Are lechery unto him, and so feed
His brutish sense with their afflicting sound,
As (dead to virtue) he permits himself
Be carried like a pitcher by the ears
To every act of vice; this is a case
Deserves our fear, and doth presage the nigh
And close approach of bloody tyranny.
Flattery is midwife unto princes' rage:
And nothing sooner doth help forth a tyrant
Than that, and whisperers' grace, that have the time,
The place, the power, to make all men offenders!"

The only part of this play in which Ben Jonson has completely forgotten himself (or rather seems not to have done so) is in the conversations between Livia and Eudemus, about a wash for her face, here called a *fucus*, to appear before Sejanus. 'Catiline's Conspiracy' does not furnish by any means an equal number of striking passages, and is spun out to an excessive length with Cicero's artificial and affected orations against Catiline, and in praise of himself. His apologies for his own eloquence, and declarations that in all his art he uses no art at all, put one in mind of Polonius's circuitous way of coming to the point. Both these tragedies, it might be observed, are constructed on the exact principles of a French historical picture, where every head and figure is borrowed from the antique; but, somehow, the precious materials of old Roman history and character are better preserved in Jonson's page than on David's canvas.

Two of the most poetical passages in Ben Jonson are the description of Echo in 'Cynthia's Revels,' and the fine comparison of the mind to a temple, in the 'New Inn;' a play which, on the whole, however, I can read with no patience.

I must hasten to conclude this Lecture with some account of Massinger and Ford, who wrote in the time of Charles I. I am sorry I cannot do it *con amore*. The writers of whom I have

to his wife, and when she has gained her object, tells the king her husband in pure caprice and fickleness of purpose. 'The Virgin Martyr' is nothing but a tissue of instantaneous conversions to and from Paganism and Christianity. The only scenes of any real beauty and tenderness in this play, are those between Dorothea and Angelo, her supposed friendless beggar-boy, but her guardian angel in disguise, which are understood to be by Decker. The interest of 'The Bondman' turns upon two different acts of penance and self-denial, in the persons of the hero and heroine, Pisander and Cleora. In the Duke of Milan (the most poetical of Massinger's productions), Sforza's resolution to destroy his wife, rather than bear the thought of her surviving him, is as much out of the verge of nature and probability, as it is unexpected and revolting, from the want of any circumstances of palliation leading to it. It stands out alone, a pure piece of voluntary atrocity, which seems not the dictate of passion, but a start of phrensy; as cold-blooded in the execution as it is extravagant in the conception.

Again, Francesco, in this play, is a person whose actions we are at a loss to explain till the conclusion of the piece, when the attempt to account for them from motives originally amiable and generous, only produces a double sense of incongruity, and instead of satisfying the mind, renders it totally incredulous. He endeavours to seduce the wife of his benefactor, he then (failing) attempts her death, slanders her foully, and wantonly causes her to be slain by the hand of her husband, and has him poisoned by a nefarious stratagem, and all this to appease a high sense of injured honour, that "felt a stain like a wound," and from the tender overflowing of fraternal affection, his sister having, it appears, been formerly betrothed to, and afterwards deserted by, the Duke of Milan. Sir Giles Overreach is the most successful and striking effort of Massinger's pen, and the best known to the reader, but it will hardly be thought to form an exception to the tenor of the above remarks.* The same spirit of caprice and

* The following criticism on this play has appeared in another publication, but may be not improperly inserted here:

"'A New Way to Pay Old Debts' is certainly a very admirable play, and highly characteristic of the genius of its author, which was hard and forcible,

sullenness survives in Rowe's 'Fair Penitent,' taken from this author's 'Fatal Dowry.'

Ford is not so great a favourite with me as with some others, from whose judgment I dissent with diffidence. It has been remarked [illegible]

mented that the play of his which has been most admired ('Tis Pity She's a Whore') had not a less exceptionable subject. I do not know, but I suspect that the exceptionableness of the subject is that which constitutes the chief merit of the play. The re-

enormous possessions—to what?—to a title, a sound, to make his daughter 'right honourable,' the wife of a lord whose name he cannot repeat without loathing, and in the end he becomes the dupe of, and falls a victim to, that very opinion of the world which he despises!

"The character of Sir Giles Overreach has been found fault with as unnatural; and it may, perhaps, in the present refinement of our manners, have become in a great measure obsolete. But we doubt whether even still, in remote and insulated parts of the country, sufficient traces of the same character of wilful selfishness, mistaking the inveteracy of its purposes for their rectitude, and boldly appealing to power, as justifying the abuses of power, may not be found to warrant this an undoubted original—probably a facsimile of some individual of the poet's actual acquaintance. In less advanced periods of society than that in which we live, if we except rank, which can neither be an object of common pursuit nor immediate attainment, money is the only acknowledged passport to respect. It is not merely valuable as a security from want, but it is the only defence against the insolence of power. Avarice is sharpened by pride and necessity. There are then few of the arts, the amusements, and accomplishments, that soften and sweeten life, that raise or refine it: the only way in which any one can be of service to himself or another, is by his command over the gross commodities of life; and a man is worth just so much as he has. Where he who is not 'lord of acres' is looked upon as a slave and a beggar, the soul becomes wedded to the soil by which its worth is measured, and takes root in it in proportion to its own strength and stubbornness of character. The example of Wellborn may be cited in illustration of these remarks. The loss of his land makes all the difference between 'young master Wellborn' and 'rogue Wellborn:' and the treatment he meets with in this latter capacity is the best apology for the character of Sir Giles. Of the two, it is better to be the oppressor than the oppressed.

"Massinger, it is true, dealt generally in extreme characters, as well as in very repulsive ones. The passion is with him wound up to its height at first, and he never lets it down afterwards. It does not gradually arise out of previous circumstances, nor is it modified by other passions. This gives an appearance of abruptness, violence, and extravagance to all his plays. Shakspeare's characters act from mixed motives, and are made what they are by various circumstances. Massinger's characters act from single motives, and become what they are, and remain so, by a pure effort of the will, in spite of circumstances. This last author endeavoured to embody an abstract principle; laboured hard to bring out the same individual trait in its most exaggerated state; and the force of his impassioned characters arises for the most part from the obstinacy with which they exclude every other feeling. Their vices look of a gigantic stature from their standing alone. Their actions seem extrava-

pulsiveness of the story is what gives it its critical interest; for it is a studiously prosaic statement of facts, and made the foundation of passions. It was not the least of Shakespeare's praise that he never tampered with unfair subjects. His genius was above it; his taste kept aloof from it. I do not deny the power of simple painting and polished style in this tragedy in general, and of a great deal more in some few of the scenes, particularly in the quarrel between Annabella and her husband, which is wrought up to a pitch of demoniac scorn and phrenzy with consummate art and knowledge; but I do not find much other power in the author (generally speaking) than that of playing with edged tools, and knowing the use of poisoned weapons. And what confirms me in this opinion is the comparative inefficiency [illegible]. Except the last scene of 'The Broken Heart' [illegible]

[illegible]

mathematical stair-case of the words and answers given to different speakers,* is an instance of frigid and ridiculous pedantry. An artificial elaborateness is the general characteristic of Ford's style. In this respect his plays resemble Miss Baillie's more than any others I am acquainted with, and are quite distinct from the exuberance and unstudied force which characterized his immediate predecessors. There is too much of scholastic subtlety, an innate perversity of understanding or predominance of will, which either seeks the irritation of inadmissible subjects, or to stimulate its own faculties by taking the most barren, and making something out of nothing, in a spirit of contradiction. He does not *draw along with* the reader: he does not work upon our sympathy, but on our antipathy or our indifference, and there is as little of the social or gregarious principle in his productions as there appears to have been in his personal habits, if we are to believe Sir John Suckling, who says of him, in the Sessions of the Poets—

> "In the dumps John Ford alone by himself sat
> With folded arms and melancholy hat."

I do not remember without considerable effort the plot or persons of most of his plays—'Perkin Warbeck,' 'The Lover's Melancholy,' 'Love's Sacrifice,' and the rest. There is little character, except of the most evanescent or extravagant kind (to which last class we may refer that of the sister of Calantha in 'The Broken Heart')—little imagery or fancy, and no action. It is but fair, however, to give a scene or two, in illustration of these remarks (or in confutation of them, if they are wrong), and I shall take the concluding one of 'The Broken Heart,' which is held up as the author's master-piece.

* "*Ithocles.* Soft peace enrich this room.
Orgilus. How fares the lady?
Philema. Dead!
Christalla. Dead!
Philema. Starv'd!
Christalla. Starv'd!
Ithocles. Me miserable!"

" SCENE.—*A Room in the Palace.*

A Flourish.—*Enter* ERIPHANIA, *led by* CLEONTES; HERMOGENES, PHILOTUS *bearing* CHRISTACUS *and* PHILEMAC; NARBONA, CLEANTHA, CLEORA, *and* AMELUS.

Cle. We miss our servants. How looks all? Orgilus—On what occasion they?

Cleo. My son, gracious princes,

What's in some new device to welcome these revels
Secret to the universe: where in I conceive
Lost Princes and the truest fare actions.

Cle. A fair excuse for absence. As for Bessanes,
Despites to come are troublesome. Amphos's
Is with the king?

Cleo. He is.

Cle. On to the dance!
Cornelia lead to the lady: the rich crown must be
Performed by my eldest. Be your graces,
Beginners. I shall merely prove a spectator.
For [illegible]

The [illegible] *of* ARMOSTES)

Arm. [illegible] *Cleontes*) Deliver your father's head

Cal. To the other change.

Arm. Is't possible

The [illegible] —*Enter* BESSANES

Bes. [illegible] *Cleontes*—Oh! Madam,
Pardon your Penthean servant.

Cal. Beshrew thee!
Let [illegible]
Bes. [illegible]

The [illegible] *Enter* ORGILUS

Org. Brave Princes [illegible]
Cle. How [illegible] [illegible]
Our [illegible]
With [illegible]
Org. Lend them your hands.

The [illegible]

Cle. [illegible] *Music*) How like you this motion
Rash [illegible]
No [illegible]
A [illegible]
The [illegible]
Cal. We all look cheerfully:
And [illegible]

* "How [illegible] Music!"

In any who prefers our lawful pleasures
Before their own sour censure, to interrupt
The custom of this ceremony bluntly.
Near. None dares, lady.
Cal. Yes, yes; some hollow voice deliver'd to me
How that the king was dead.
Arm. The king is dead," &c. &c.

This, I confess, appears to me to be tragedy in masquerade. Nor is it, I think, accounted for, though it may be in part redeemed by her solemn address at the altar to the dead body of her husband.

" *Cal.* Forgive me. Now I turn to thee, thou shadow
Of my contracted lord! Bear witness all,
I put my mother's wedding-ring upon
His finger; 'twas my father's last bequest:
(*Places a ring on the finger of* ITHOCLES.)
Thus I new marry him, whose wife I am:
Death shall not separate us. Oh, my lords,
I but deceived your eyes with antic gesture,
When one news strait came huddling on another
Of death, and death, and death: still I danced forward;
But it struck home and here, and in an instant.
Be such mere women, who with shrieks and outcries
Can vow a present end to all their sorrows,
Yet live to court new pleasures, and outlive them:
They are the silent griefs which cut the heartstrings:
Let me die smiling.
Near. 'Tis a truth too ominous.
Cal. One kiss on these cold lips—my last: crack, crack
Argos, now Sparta's king, command the voices
Which wait at th' altar, now to sing the song
I fitted for my end."

And then, after the song, she dies.

This is the true false gallop of sentiment: anything more artificial and mechanical I cannot conceive. The boldness of the attempt, however, the very extravagance, might argue the reliance of the author on the truth of feeling prompting him to hazard it: but the whole scene is a forced transposition of that already alluded to in Marston's 'Malcontent.' Even the form of the stage directions is the same.

Enter Mes[illegible] D[illegible], C[illegible], *L*[illegible]

[illegible]

A[illegible] We[illegible] Mes[illegible]

E[illegible]

We[illegible]

[illegible] M[illegible]

P[illegible] [illegible]

A[illegible] Mes[illegible]

E[illegible]

[illegible]

A[illegible] We[illegible]

E[illegible]

P[illegible] [illegible]; he [illegible]

[illegible]

E[illegible] M[illegible] *H*[illegible] *H*[illegible]

M[illegible]

A[illegible] Mes[illegible] *A*[illegible]

[illegible]

Mr. [illegible]

Broken Heart,' has failed (as far as I can judge) in establishing the parallel between this uncalled-for exhibition of stoicism, and the story of the Spartan boy.

It may be proper to remark here, that most of the great men of the period I have treated of (except the greatest of all, and one other,) were men of classical education. They were learned men in an unlettered age ; not self-taught men in a literary and critical age. This circumstance should be taken into the account in a theory of the dramatic genius of that age. Except Shakspeare, nearly all of them, indeed, came up from Oxford or Cambridge, and immediately began to write for the stage. No wonder. The first coming up to London in those days must have had a singular effect upon a young man of genius, almost like visiting Babylon or Susa, or a journey to the other world. The stage (even as it then was,) after the recluseness and austerity of a college life, must have appeared like Armida's enchanted palace, and its gay votaries like

> " Fairy elves beyond the Indian mount,
> Whose midnight revels, by a forest side
> Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
> Or dreams he sees; while overhead the moon
> Sits arbitress, and nearer to the earth
> Wheels her pale course: they on their mirth and dance
> Intent, with jocund music charm his ear:
> At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds."

So our young novices must have felt when they first saw the magic of the scene, and heard its syren sounds with rustic wonder and the scholar's pride: and the joy that streamed from their eyes at that fantastic vision, at that gaudy shadow of life, of all its business and all its pleasures, and kindled their enthusiasm to join the mimic throng, still has left a long lingering glory behind it ; and though now " deaf the praised ear, and mute the tuneful tongue," lives in their eloquent page, " informed with music, sentiment, and thought, never to die!"

LECTURE V.

On Single Plays, Poems, &c.—The Four P's. The Return from Parnassus, Gammer Gurton's Needle, &c. Dodsley's Works.

I SHALL, in this lecture, turn back to give some account of single plays, poems, &c.; the authors of which are either not known or not very eminent, and the productions themselves, in general, little remarkable for their originality, or as specimens of the style and manners of the age: such, for their antiquity or their intrinsic merit, are the following. There are many more works of this kind, however, remaining, that I can pretend to give an account of; and what I shall chiefly aim at, will be to excite the curiosity of the reader rather than satisfy it.

'The Four P's' is an interlude, or comic dialogue, in verse, between a Palmer, a Pardoner, a Poticary, and a Pedlar, in which each extols the superiority of his own and his neighbours' profession, with much humour and shrewdness. It was written by John Heywood, the Epigrammatist, who flourished chiefly in the reign of Henry VIII., was the intimate friend of Sir Thomas More, with whom he seems to have had a congenial spirit, and continued a zealous adherent to the Roman Catholic cause, even to the year 1565. He could, however, on this head, occasionally temporize; and his epigrammatic talent has preserved him from being classed with the bigots of his party. In the address of Pedlar, or wandering merchant, to the audience, with the nature of his goods, 'The Four P's' opens the year 1517. He is followed by the Palmer, who boasts of the superiority of his profession, as having visited the most remote countries, and brought home the most valuable curiosities. He is followed by the Pardoner, who, after a long harangue, in which he tells the audience that, if they will but purchase his pardons, they may commit any sin they please, and be sure of forgiveness, produces a glass of water, which he says is a sovereign remedy for all diseases, and which

the prize is adjudged to him who says that he had found a patient woman.* The common superstitions (here recorded) in civil and religious matters are almost incredible; and the chopped logic, which was the fashion of the time, and which comes in aid of the author's shrewd and pleasant sallies to expose them, is highly entertaining. Thus the Pardoner, scorning the Palmer's long pilgrimages and circuitous road to heaven, flouts him to his face, and vaunts his own superior pretensions:

"*Pard.* By the first part of this last tale,
It seemeth you came of late from the ale:
For reason on your side so far doth fail,
That you leave reasoning, and begin to rail.
Wherein you forget your own part clearly,
For you be as untrue as I:
But in one part you are beyond me,
For you may lie by authority,
And all that have wandered so far,
That no man can be their controller,
And where you esteem your labour so much
I say yet again, my pardons are such,
That if there were a thousand souls on a heap,
I would bring them all to heaven as good sheep,
As you have brought yourself on pilgrimage,
In the last quarter of your voyage,
Which is far a-this side heaven, by God:
There your labour and pardon is odd.
With small cost without any pain,
These pardons bring them to heaven plain:
Give me but a penny or two-pence,
And as soon as the soul departeth hence,
In half an hour, or three quarters at the most,
The soul is in heaven with the Holy Ghost."

The Poticary does not approve of this arrogance of the Friar, and undertakes, in mood and figure, to prove them both "false knaves." It is he, he says, who sends most souls to heaven, and who ought, therefore, to have the credit of it.

"No soul, ye know, entereth heaven-gate,
Till from the body he be separate:
And whom have ye known die honestly,

* Or, never known one otherwise than patient.

> With[illegible] help of the Pothecary?
> Nay, if that [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> I send [illegible]
> Who shows [illegible]
> Have [illegible]

The Parishioner here interrupts him impatiently—

> "If you [illegible]
> When once they to heaven, by [illegible]

But the Pothecary, not [illegible]

> "If [illegible]
> [illegible]
> . . . . . .
> [illegible]
> [illegible]

The Potter thus [illegible] his own [illegible] and [illegible] a piece of his mind.

> "Now [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]

[illegible]

folly. The sort of mummery at which popish bigotry used to play at the time when this old comedy was written, was not quite so harmless as blindman's-buff: what was sport to her, was death to others. She laughed at her own mockeries of common sense and true religion, and murdered while she laughed. The tragic farce was no longer to be borne, and it was partly put an end to. At present, though her eyes are blind-folded, her hands are tied fast behind her, like the false Duessa's. The sturdy genius of modern philosophy has got her in much the same situation that Count Fathom has the old woman that he lashes before him from the robbers' cave in the forest. In the following dialogue of this lively satire, the most sacred mysteries of the Catholic faith are mixed up with its idlest legends by old Heywood, who was a martyr to his religious zeal, without the slightest sense of impropriety. The Pardoner cries out in one place (like a lusty Friar John, or a trusty Friar Onion)—

"Lo, here be pardons, half a dozen,
For ghostly riches they have no cousin
And, moreover, to me they bring
Sufficient succour for my living.
And here be relics of such a kind
As in this world no man can find.
Kneel down all three, and when ye leave kissing,
Who list to offer shall have my blessing.
Friends, here shall ye see, even anon,
Of All-Hallows the blessed jaw-bone.
Mark well this, this relic here is a whipper;
My friends unfeigned, here's a slipper
Of one of the seven sleepers, be sure.—
Here is an eye-tooth of the great Turk:
Whose eyes be once set on this piece of work,
May happily lose part of his eye-sight,
But not all till he be blind outright.
Kiss it hardly, with good devotion.
Pot. This kiss shall bring us much promotion:
Fogh! by St. Saviour, I never kiss'd a worse.
* * * * * * * *
For, by All-Hallows, yet methinketh
That All-Hallows' breath stinketh.
Palm. Ye judge All-Hallows' breath unknown·
If any breath stink, it is your own.

P. C. I know some owe a reach from All Hallows,
Or else it were time to kiss the gallows.
P. C. Nay, sirs, now may you see
The greatness of the Trinity
When three such men meet in a company,
And since it was not rich in numbers,
All has life and I confess
He's a knave never but a knave, that says the contrary.
P. C. I pray you turn that reckoning;
Rather the Trinity in the Unity
Or else for mine it is three toys in one,
God made it as much as three toys alone.
P. C. Well, let that pass, and look upon this:
Here is a riddle that does not miss
To help your host as well as the guest:
Three sat down to eat and Pentecost
* * * * * * *
Here is a fox full of craft and art
That says he loves us best when we are at his knees
Tasting the fruit to her forbidden:
We [illegible] forbidden,
Stay, have at him with point and edge,
As for any one to be [illegible]
Good faith, I know you come of a good class,
Wellfare the craft of the weaving was
Of Adam and Eve [illegible]
If [illegible]
[illegible]
You [illegible]
[illegible]

The same [illegible]'s guild and in my ears through the Apothecary's knave [illegible] of mouth-pieces in his possession:

"For [illegible]
And [illegible] they need no other.
He [illegible]
A [illegible]
For [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
And [illegible]
Here is [illegible] name.

Which commonly is called thus by name.
Not one thing here particularly,
But worketh universally;
For it doth me as much good when I sell it,
As all the buyers that take it or smell it.
If any reward may entreat ye,
I beseech your mastership be good to me,
And ye shall have a box of marmalade,
So fine that you may dig it with a spade."

After these quaint but pointed examples of it, Swift's boast with respect to the invention of irony,

"Which I was born to introduce,
Refin'd it first, and shew'd its use,

can be allowed to be true only in part.

The controversy between them being undecided, the Apothecary, to clench his pretensions "as a liar of the first magnitude," by a *coup de-grace*, says to the Pedlar, "You are an honest man;" but this home-thrust is somehow ingeniously parried. The Apothecary and Pardoner fall to their narrative vein again; and the latter tells a story of fetching a young woman from the lower world, from which I shall only give one specimen more as an instance of ludicrous and fantastic exaggeration. By the help of a passport from Lucifer, "given in the furnace of our palace," he obtains a safe conduct from one of the subordinate imps to his master's presence:

"The devil and I walked arm in arm
So far, till he had brought me thither,
Where all the devils of hell together
Stood in array in such apparel,
As for that day there meetly fell.
Their horns well gilt, their claws full clean,
Their tails well kempt, and, as I ween,
With sothery butter their bodies anointed;
I never saw devils so well appointed.
The master-devil sat in his jacket,
And all the souls were playing at racket.
None other rackets they had in hand,
Save every soul a good fire-brand;
Wherewith they play'd so prettily,
That Lucifer laughed merrily.

And all [illegible]
Did [illegible] friends.
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] ence,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] eeks;
[illegible]
[illegible] nels;
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

The [illegible] advice from [illegible] 'Excursion,' [illegible] stream of Tennyson." [illegible] modern instances [illegible]

[illegible] ing,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] st
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] them,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] first [illegible]

ableness of a scholar's life. The only part I object to in our author's criticism is his abuse of Marston; and that, not because he says what is severe, but because he says what is not true of him. Anger may sharpen our insight into men's defects; but nothing should make us blind to their excellences. The whole passage is, however, so curious in itself (like the 'Edinburgh Review' lately published for the year 1755) that I cannot forbear quoting a great part of it. We find in the list of candidates for praise many a name—

"That like a trumpet makes the spirits dance;"

there are others that have long since sunk to the bottom of the stream of time, and no Humane Society of Antiquarians and Critics is ever likely to fish them up again.

"*Judicio.* Read the names.

Ingenioso. So I will, if thou wilt help me to censure them.

Edmund Spenser,	John Davis,
Henry Constable,	John Marston,
Thomas Lodge,	Kit Marlowe,
Samuel Daniel,	William Shakspeare;
Thomas Watson,	and one Churchyard,
Michael Drayton,	[who is consigned to an untimely grave.'

Good men and true, stand together, hear your censure: what's thy judgment of Spenser?

Jud. A sweeter swan than ever sung in Po;
A shriller nightingale than ever blest
The prouder groves of self-admiring Rome,
Blithe was each valley, and each shepherd proud,
While he did chaunt his rural minstrelsy.
Attentive was full many a dainty ear:
Nay, hearers hung upon his melting tongue,
While sweetly of his Faery Queen he sung,
While to the water's fall he tun'd her fame,
And in each bark engrav'd Eliza's name.
And yet for all, this unregarding soil
Unlaced the line of his desired life,
Denying maintenance for his dear relief;
Careless even to prevent his exequy,
Scarce deigning to shut up his dying eye.

Ing. Pity it is that gentler wits should breed,
Where thick-skinned churls laugh at a scholar's need.
But softly may our honour'd ashes rest,
That lie by merry Chaucer's noble chest.

But I pray thee proceed briefly in thy censure, that I may be proud of myself as to the first sentence of your censure may [illegible] Henry Constable, Samuel Daniel, Thomas Lodge, Thomas Watson

J. [illegible]

I. [illegible]

J. [illegible]

I. [illegible]

J. [illegible]

I. [illegible]

J. [illegible]

I. [illegible]

J. [illegible]

I. [illegible]

J. [illegible]

I. [illegible]

J. [illegible]

I. [illegible]

J. [illegible]

I. [illegible]

J. [illegible]

I. [illegible]

J. [illegible] England.

Ing. A mere empiric, one that gets what he hath by observation, and makes only nature privy to what he endites: so slow an inventor, that he were better betake himself to his old trade of bricklaying; a blood whoreson, as confident now in making of a book, as he was in times past in laying of a brick.
William Shakspeare.
Jud. Who loves Adonis' love, or Lucrece' rape,
His sweeter verse contains heart-robbing life.
Could but a graver subject him content,
Without love's lazy foolish languishment."

This passage might seem to ascertain the date of the piece, as it must be supposed to have been written before Shakspeare had become known as a dramatic poet. Yet he afterwards introduces Kempe the actor talking with Burbage, and saying, "Few (of the University) pens play well: they smell too much of that writer Ovid, and of that writer Metamorphosis, and talk too much of Proserpina and Jupiter. Why, here's our fellow Shakspeare puts them all down; ay, and Ben Jonson too."—There is a good deal of discontent in all this; but the author complains of want of success in a former attempt, and appears not to have been on good terms with fortune. The miseries of a poet's life forms one of the favourite topics of 'The Return from Parnassus,' and are treated as if by some one who had "felt them knowingly." Thus Philomusus and Studioso chaunt their griefs in concert.

"*Phil.* Bann'd be those hours, when 'mongst the learned throng,
By Granta's muddy bank we whilom sung.
Stud. Bann'd be that hill which learned wits adore,
Where erst we spent our stock and little store.
Phil. Bann'd be those musty mews, where we have spent
Our youthful days in paled languishment.
Stud. Bann'd be those cozening arts that wrought our woe,
Making us wandering pilgrims to and fro.
Phil. Curst be our thoughts whene'er they dream of hope;
Bann'd be those haps that henceforth flatter us,
When mischief dogs us still, and still for aye,
From our first birth until our burying day.
In our first gamesome age, our doting sires
Carked and car'd to have us lettered:
Sent us to Cambridge where our oil is spent:
Us our kind college from the teat did tent,
And forced us walk before we weaned were.

From the
In
No
The

[illegible]

[illegible] Parnassus, [illegible]

> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]

[illegible]

slippers, sit rheuming till dinner, and then go to his meat when the bell rings; one that hath a peculiar gift in a cough, and a license to spit: or if you will have him defined by negatives, he is one that cannot make a good leg, one that cannot eat a mess of broth cleanly, one that cannot ride a horse without spur-galling, one that cannot salute a woman and look on her directly, one that cannot ——"

If I was not afraid of being tedious, I might here give the examination of Signor Immerito, a raw ignorant clown (whose father has purchased him a living,) by Sir Roderick and the Recorder, which throws a considerable light on the state of wit and humour, as well as of ecclesiastical patronage in the reign of Elizabeth. It is to be recollected that one of the titles of this play is "A Scourge for Simony.'

Rec. For as much as nature has done her part in making you a handsome likely man—in the next place some art is requisite for the perfection of nature: for the trial whereof, at the request of my worshipful friend, I will in some sort propound questions fit to be resolved by one of your profession. Say what is a person that was never at the university?

Im. A person that was never in the university, is a living creature that can eat a tythe pig.

Rec. Very well answered: but you should have added—and must be officious to his patron. Write down that answer, to shew his learning in logic.

Sir Rod. Yea, boy, write that down: very learnedly, in good faith. I pray now let me ask you one question that I remember, whether is the masculine gender or the feminine more worthy?

Im. The feminine, sir.

Sir Rod. The right answer, the right answer. In good faith, I have been of that mind always: write, boy, that, to shew he is a grammarian.

Rec. What university are you of?

Im. Of none.

Sir Rod. He tells truth: to tell truth is an excellent virtue: boy, make two heads, one for his learning, another for his virtues, and refer this to the head of his virtues, not of his learning. Now, Master Recorder, if it please you, I will examine him in an author, that will sound him to the depth; a book of astronomy, otherwise called an almanack.

Rec. Very good, Sir Roderick; it were to be wished there were no other book of humanity: then there would not be such busy state-prying fellows as are now a-days. Proceed, good sir.

Sir Rod. What is the dominical letter?

Im. C, sir, and please your worship.

Sir Rod. A very good answer, a very good answer, the very answer of the

book. Write down that, and I order it to his stock in paper-spray. How many days have September?

I. M. I have thirty days in September, April, June, and November. February has twenty-eight alone, and all the rest have thirty-one.

S. R. Very learnedly and good faith. Write down that answer of his in poetry. Write down that boy's answer in poetry. How many days from Wednesday to Friday?

Im. Twelve, sir.

S. R. How many days, Newmarket to Grantham?

I. M. Ten, sir.

S. R. Write down that answer of his, to show his learning in the [*sic*].

P. H. How many days is it to Christmas, and that you may [*sic*] by my saying so?

S. R. Write down that.

I. M. I suppose that will be fifty-two of the clock, and thirty-eight minutes, and a half.

S. R. [illegible]

P. H. A good answer.

S. R. [illegible] What day of the month is it?

I. M. The 17th of November.

S. R. Boy, set down that answer, and write down, a good subject.

P. H. [illegible]

S. R. [illegible]

I. M. [illegible]

S. R. [illegible]

I. M. [illegible]

[illegible]

S. R. [illegible] Master [illegible]

[illegible]

P. H. [illegible]

[illegible]

from controversies; secondly, not to gird at men of worship, such as myself, but to use yourself discreetly; thirdly, not to speak when any man or woman coughs: do so, and in so doing, I will persevere to be your worshipful friend and loving patron. Lead Immerito in to my son, and let him despatch him, and remember my tythes to be reserved, paying twelve-pence a-year.

'Gammer Gurton's Needle'* is a still older and more curious relic; and is a regular comedy in five acts, built on the circumstance of an old woman having lost her needle, which throws the whole village into confusion, till it is at last providentially found sticking in an unlucky part of Hodge's dress. This must evidently have happened at a time when the manufacturers of Sheffield and Birmingham had not reached the height of perfection which they have at present done. Suppose that there is only one sewing-needle in a parish, that the owner, a diligent, notable old dame, loses it, that a mischief-making wag sets it about that another old woman has stolen this valuable instrument of household industry, that strict search is made everywhere in-doors for it in vain, and that then the incensed parties sally forth to scold it out in the open air, till words end in blows, and the affair is referred over to the higher authorities, and we shall have an exact idea (though perhaps not so lively a one) of what passes in this authentic document between Gammer Gurton and her Gossip Dame Chat, Diccon the Bedlam (the causer of these harms), Hodge, Gammer Gurton's servant, Tyb, her maid, Cocke, her 'prentice boy, Doll, Scapethrift, Master Baillie, his master, Doctor Rat, the curate, and Gib the Cat, who may be fairly reckoned one of the *dramatis personæ*, and performs no mean part.

"Gog's crosse, Gammer" (says Cocke, the boy), "if ye will laugh, look in but at the door.
And see how Hodge doth tumbling and tossing amidst the floor.
Raking there some fire to find among the ashes dead†
Where there is not a spark so big as a pin's head:
At last in a dark corner two sparks he thought he sees,
Which were indeed nought else but Gib our cat's two eyes.

* The name of Still has been assigned as the author of this singular production, with the date of 1566.

† That is, to light a candle to look for the lost needle.

Puff quoth Hodge; thinking thereby to have fire without doubt;
With that Gib sat her two eyes, and so the fire was out:
And by and by them open'd, even as they were before,
With that the sparks appeared, even as they had done of yore,
And even as Hodge blew the fire, as Gib sat wink,
Gib, as he felt the blast straight way to wax to wink;
Tut Hodge fell of swearing, cursed Gib to a stream:
The fire was soon bewitch'd, and never more would burn
At last Gib up the stairs scrambled on all fours and pers,
And Hodge he had him after, till both were both his shins.
Curs'd on, swearing Gib's were never of his making
That Gib would fire the house, if that she were not taken.

Dicon, the strolling beggar (or Bedlam, as he is called,) steals a piece of bacon from behind Gammer Gurton's door, and in answer to Hodge's complaint of being shamefully pinched for hunger, tells him—

"Why, Hodge, we poor [illegible] to get:
Gib cat, quoth he, is not so nice, but she will eat a mouse;
See, Dicon, how so well we fare [illegible]
A pestilence on [illegible], I and my dog might starve,
Of a roasted cat, a mouse and bone, scarce I could not gnaw,
But why is Gib so good to us I was wont to go
Gog's soul! Dicon, Gib mouse! Gib mouse!

Hodge's suspicions are aroused. Dicon attempts to explain what he means, but Hodge changes his mind, and, with the aid of a quarterstaff, makes Dicon confess the truth. Dicon, in more civilized terms, tells Hodge that Gib is a—

"Hodge. Hodge [illegible] [So it is called here.]
"Dicon. [illegible] Hodge. Hodge. Why, Dicon, was the cat a dainty dish.
Hodge. [illegible] nor fish.
A [illegible]
Stra[illegible]
Dicon. [illegible]
Hodge. [illegible]
A neg[illegible]

The rogue Diccon threatens to show Hodge a spirit; but though Hodge runs away through pure fear before it has time to appear, he does not fail, in the true spirit of credulity, to give a faithful and alarming account of what he did not see to his mistress, concluding with a hit at the Popish clergy.

"By the mass, I saw him of late call up a great black devil.
Oh, the knave cried, ho, ho, he roared and thunder'd;
And ye had been there, I am sure, you'd murrainly ha' wonder'd.
Gam. Wast not thou afraid, Hodge, to see him in his place?
Hodge, (*lies and says*). No and he had come to me, should have laid him on his face,
Should have promised him.
Gam. But, Hodge, had he no horns to push?
Hodge. As long as your two arms. Saw ye never Friar Rush,
Painted on a cloth, with a fine long cow's tail,
And crooked cloven feet, and many a hooked nail?
For all the world (if I should judge) should reckon him his brother:
Look even what face Friar Rush had, the devil had such another."

He then adds (quite apocryphally) while he is in for it, that "the devil said plainly that Dame Chat had got the needle," which makes all the disturbance. The same play contains the well-known good old song, beginning and ending—

"Back and side go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand go cold:
But belly, God send thee good ale enough,
Whether it be new or old,
I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good;
But sure I think, that I can drink
With him that wears a hood:
Though I go bare, take ye no care;
I nothing am a-cold:
I stuff my skin so full within
Of jolly good ale and old.
Back and side go bare, &c.

I love no roast, but a nut-brown toast,
And a crab laid in the fire:
A little bread shall do me stead,
Much bread I do not desire.
No frost or snow, no wind I trow,
Can hurt me if I wolde,
I am so wrapt, and thoroughly lapt

In jolly good ale and old
Back and side go bare, &c.

And Tib, my wife, that as her life
Loveth well good ale to seek:
Full oft drinks she, till ye may see
The tears run down her cheek.
Then doth she trowl to me the bowl,
Even as a malt worm should be:
And saith, sweetheart, I took my part
Of this jolly good ale and old
Back and side go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand go cold:
But belly, God send thee good ale enough,
Whether it be new or old.

Such was the wit, such was the mirth of our ancestors:—homely, but hearty; coarse perhaps, but kindly. Let no man despise it, for "Evil to him that evil thinks." To thank it poor and beneath notice because it is not just like ours, is the same sort of hypercriticism that was exercised by the poet who refused to read some old books, because they were "such very poor spelling." The meagreness of their literary or their bodily fare was at least relished by themselves; and this is better than a surfeit or an indigestion. It is refreshing to look out of ourselves sometimes, not to be always holding the glass to our own peerless perfections; and as there is a dead wall which always interrupts the prospect of the future from our view, call that what we can see beyond it "the heavens," it is as well to direct our eyes now and then without doors to the pages of history, and to rejoice in our attempts to penetrate the secrets of the two-six thousand years, not to turn our backs on auld lang syne!

The other detached plays of nearly the same period of which I propose to give a cursory account, are "Greene's Tu Quoque," "Mucedorus," "Lingua," "The Merry Devil of Edmonton," "The Pinner of Wakefield," and "The Spanish Tragedy." Of the spurious plays attributed to Shakespeare, and to be found in some of the editions of his works, such as "The Yorkshire Tragedy," "Sir John Oldcastle," "The Wit of a Woman," "Merry Street," &c., I shall say nothing here, because I suppose the reader to be already acquainted with them, and because I have given a general account of them in another work.

'Green's Tu Quoque,' by George Cook, a contemporary of Shakspeare's, is so called from Green the actor, who played the part of Bubble in this very lively and elegant comedy, with the cant phrase of *Tu quoque* perpetually in his mouth. The double change of situation between this fellow and his master, Staines, each passing from poverty to wealth, and from wealth to poverty again, is equally well imagined and executed. A gay and gallant spirit pervades the whole of it; wit, poetry, and morality, each take their turn in it. The characters of the two sisters, Joyce and Gertrude, are very skilfully contrasted, and the manner in which they mutually betray one another into the hands of their lovers, first in the spirit of mischief, and afterwards of retaliation, is quite dramatic. "If you cannot find in your heart to tell him you love him, I'll sigh it out for you. Come, we little creatures must help one another," says the Madcap to the Madonna. As to style and matter, this play has a number of pigeon-holes full of wit and epigrams which are flying out in almost every sentence. I could give twenty pointed conceits, wrapped up in good set terms. Let one or two at the utmost suffice. A bad hand at cards is thus described. Will Rash says to Scattergood, "Thou hast a wild hand indeed; thy small cards show like a troop of rebels, and the knave of clubs is their chief leader." Bubble expresses a truism very gaily on finding himself equipped like a gallant—"How apparel makes a man respected! The very children in the street do adore me." We find here the first mention of Sir John Suckling's "melancholy hat," as a common article of wear—the same which he chose to clap on Ford's head, and the first instance of the theatrical *double entendre* which has been repeated ever since of an actor's ironically abusing himself in his feigned character.

"*Gervase.* They say Green's a good clown.

Bubble, (played by Green, says) Green! Green's an ass.

Scattergood. Wherefore do you say so?

Bub. Indeed, I ha' no reason; for they say he's as like me as ever he can look."

The following description of the dissipation of a fortune in the hands of a spendthrift is ingenious and beautiful:

"Know that which made him gracious in your eyes,
And gilded o'er his imperfections,
Is wasted and consume'd even like ice,
Which by the vehemence of heat dissolves,
And grides to many rivers: so is wealth,
That fed a prodigal, but no expense,
Melted with his groping out hands, is scoffers
Ran like a river: stir not to other men's."

'Microcosmus,' by Thomas Nabbes, is a dramatic mask or allegory, in which the Senses, the Soul, a Good and a Bad Genius, Conscience, &c., contend for the dominion of a man; and notwithstanding the awkwardness of the machinery, is not without poetry, elegance, and originality. Take the description of morning as a proof:

"What do I see? Blush, rosy eyed morn, and spread
Thy purple mantle o'er the azure deeps,
Or paint thy face with scarlet, or the roses
Adorn your Vermilion cheeks, for the bright sun
Thou brings'st on."

But what are we to think of a play, of which the following is a literal list of the *dramatis personæ*?

"Nature, a fair woman, in white, with beads, bosses, fruits, flowers, corals, shells, &c. An orient pearl, a woman all in white, interwoven with stars.

Justice, a woman, with a face [illegible] a pale, with a pale white, with stars [illegible] with a wreath of white. Her Assistants.

Peace, a fair woman, with a [illegible] with a wreath of olive; with [illegible] Her Assistants.

Art, a young man, with a [illegible] with a wreath of bays. Her Assistants.

Wisdom, a woman, with a [illegible] with waves, her hair [illegible] with a wreath of sedge, bound about with waves. Her Assistants.

Love, a [illegible] with a wreath of myrtle, with [illegible] Her Assistants.

Love, a [illegible] with a wreath of myrtle, with [illegible] Her Assistants.

Physiognomy, [illegible] with a garland of [illegible] Her Assistants.

Choler, a fencer; his clothes red.
Blood, a dancer, in a watchet-coloured suit.
Phlegm, a physician, an old man; his doublet white and black; trunk hose.
Melancholy, a musician; his complexion, hair, and clothes black; a lute in his hand. He is likewise an amorist.
Bellanima, a lovely woman, in a long white robe; on her head a wreath of white flowers. She signifies the soul.
Bonus Genius, an angel, in a like white robe; wings and wreath white.
Malus Genius, a devil, in a black robe; hair, wreath, and wings black.
The Five Senses—Seeing, a chambermaid; Hearing, the usher of the hall; Smelling, a huntsman or gardener; Tasting, a cook; Touching, a gentleman usher.
Sensuality, a wanton woman, richly habited, but lasciviously dressed, &c.
Temperance, a lovely woman, of a modest countenance; her garments plain, but decent, &c.
A Philosopher,
An Eremite,
A Ploughman,
A Shepherd,
} all properly habited.
Three Furies as they are commonly fancied.
Fear, the crier of the court, with a tipstaff.
Conscience, the Judge of the court.
Hope and Despair, an advocate and a lawyer.
The other three Virtues, as they are frequently expressed by painters.
The Heroes, in bright antique habits, &c.
The front of a workmanship proper to the fancy of the rest, adorned with brass figures of angels and devils, with several inscriptions; the title is an escutcheon, supported by an angel and a devil. Within the arch a continuing perspective of ruins, which is drawn still before the other scenes, whilst they are varied.

THE INSCRIPTIONS.

Hinc gloria. Hinc pœna.
Appetitus boni. Appetitus mali."

Antony Brewer's 'Lingua' (1607) is of the same cast. It is much longer as well as older than 'Microcosmus.' It is also an allegory celebrating the contention of the Five Senses for the crown of superiority, and the pretensions of Lingua, or the Tongue, to be admitted as a sixth sense. It is full of child's play, and old wives' tales; but is not unadorned with passages displaying strong good sense, and powers of fantastic description.

Mr. Lamb has quoted two passages from it—the admirable enumeration of the characteristics of different languages, 'The Chaldee wise, the Arabian physical,' &c.; and the striking de-

scription of the ornaments and uses of tragedy and comedy. The dialogue between Memory, Common Sense, and Phantastes, is curious and worth considering:

'*Common Sense.* Why, good father, why are you so late now-a-days?

Memory. Thus 'tis; the most customers I remember myself to have, are, as your worship knows, scholars, and now-a-days the most of them are become critics, bringing me home such paltry things to lay up for them, that I can hardly find them again.

Phantastes. Jupiter, Jupiter! I had thought these fleas had bit none but myself; do critics tickle you, i' faith?

Memory. Very familiarly; for they must know of me, forsooth, how every idle word is written in all the musty moth-eaten manuscripts kept in all the old libraries in every city, betwixt England and Peru.

Common Sense. Indeed I have noted these times to affect antiquities more than is requisite.

Memory. I remember in the age of Assaracus and Ninus, and about the wars of Thebes and the siege of Troy, there were few things committed to my charge but those that were well worth the preserving; but now every trifle must be wrapt up in the volume of eternity. [illegible] called Water [illegible]; so that I never could [illegible] and never [illegible] of honourable and true [illegible].'

And again, Mendacio put in his claim with great success to many works of uncommon merit:

'*Appetitus.* [illegible] a child, and there were [illegible].

Mendacio. [illegible] years ago was Mendacio [illegible] every word [illegible] Homer [illegible] Iliads and his Odysseys.

Appetitus. [illegible].

Mendacio. [illegible] Homer [illegible] M[illegible] P[illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

this [illegible]

Mendacio. [illegible] great Homer [illegible] and as I [illegible] M[illegible] 'Decades,' [illegible] Southampton,' [illegible]

deaux,' 'Sir Guy of Warwick,' 'Martin Marprelate,' 'Robin Hood,' 'Garagantua,' 'Gerilion,' and a thousand such exquisite monuments as these, no doubt but they breathe in my breath up and down."

'The Merry Devil of Edmonton,' which has been sometimes attributed to Shakspeare, is assuredly not unworthy of him. It is more likely, however, both from the style and subject matter, to have been Heywood's than any other person's. It is perhaps the first example of sentimental comedy we have—romantic, sweet, tender, it expresses the feelings of honour, love, and friendship in their utmost delicacy, enthusiasm, and purity. The names alone, Raymond Mounchersey, Frank Jerningham, Clare, Millisent, "sound silver sweet, like lovers' tongues by night." It sets out with a sort of story of Doctor Faustus, but this is dropt as jarring on the tender chords of the rest of the piece. The wit of 'The Merry Devil of Edmonton' is as genuine as the poetry. Mine Host of the George is as good a fellow as Boniface, and the deer-stealing scenes in the forest between him, Sir John the curate, Smug the smith, and Banks the miller, are "very honest knaveries," as Sir Hugh Evans has it. The air is delicate, and the deer, shot by their cross-bows, fall without a groan! Frank Jerningham says to Clare,

"The way lies right: hark, the clock strikes at Enfield: what's the hour?
Young Clare. Ten, the bell says.
Jern. It was but eight when we set out from Cheston: Sir John and his sexton are at their ale to-night, the clock runs at random.
Y. Clare. Nay, as sure as thou livest, the villanous vicar is abroad in the chase. The priest steals more venison than half the country.
Jern. Millisent, how dost thou?
Mil. Sir, very well.
I would to God we were at Brian's lodge."

A volume might be written to prove this last answer Shakspeare's, in which the tongue says one thing in one line, and the heart contradicts it in the next; but there were other writers living in the time of Shakspeare, who knew these subtle windings of the passions besides him,—though none so well as he!

'The Pinner of Wakefield, or George a Green,' is a pleasant interlude, of an early date, and the author unknown, in which kings and cobblers, outlaws and Maid Marians, are "hail-fellow

well met," and in which the features of the antique world are made smiling and amiable enough. Jenkin, George a Green's servant, is a notorious wag. Here is one of his pretended pranks:

"*Jenkin.* This fellow comes to me,
And takes me by the bosom: you slave,
Said he, hold my horse, and look
He takes no cold in his feet.
No, marry shall he, sir, quoth I.
I'll lay my cloak underneath him.
I took my cloak, spread it all along,
And his horse on the midst of it.
George. Thou clown, did'st thou set his horse upon thy cloak?
Jenkin. Aye, but mark how I served him.
Master and he was no sooner gone down into the ditch
But I pucked out my knife, cut four holes in my cloak, and made his horse stand on the bare ground."

The first part of 'Jeronymo' is an indifferent piece of work, and the second, or 'The Spanish Tragedy,' by Kyd, is like unto it, except the interpolations idly said to have been added by Ben Jonson, relating to Jeronymo's phrensy, "which have all the melancholy madness of poetry, if not the inspiration."

LECTURE VI.

On Miscellaneous Poems; F. Beaumont, P. Fletcher, Drayton, Daniel, etc.; Sir P. Sidney's 'Arcadia,' and other works.

I SHALL, in the present Lecture, attempt to give some idea of the lighter productions of the Muse in the period before us, in order to show that grace and elegance are not confined entirely to later times, and shall conclude with some remarks on Sir Philip Sidney's 'Arcadia.'

I have already made mention of the lyrical pieces of Beaumont and Fletcher. It appears from his poems, that many of these were composed by Francis Beaumont, particularly the very beautiful ones in the tragedy of 'The False One,' the 'Praise of Love' in that of 'Valentinian,' and another in 'The Nice Valour, or Passionate Madman,' an "Address to Melancholy," which is the perfection of this kind of writing.

"Hence, all you vain delights,
As short as are the nights
Wherein you spend your folly
There's nought in this life sweet,
If man were wise to see't,
But only melancholy,
Oh, sweetest melancholy,
Welcome folded arms and fixed eyes,
A sight that piercing mortifies;
A look that's fasten'd to the ground,
A tongue chain'd up without a sound;
Fountain heads, and pathless groves,
Places which pale passion loves:
Moon-light walks, where all the fowls
Are warmly hous'd, save bats and owls;
A midnight bell, a passing groan,
These are the sounds we feed upon:
Then stretch our bones in a still, gloomy valley;
Nothing so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy."

It has been supposed (and not without every appearance of good reason) that this pensive strain, "most musical, most melancholy," gave the first suggestion of the spirited introduction to Milton's 'Il Penseroso.'

> "Hence, vain deluding joys,
> The brood of folly without father bred!
> But hail! thou Goddess, sage and holy,
> Hail, divinest melancholy,
> Whose saintly visage is too bright
> To hit the sense of human sight," &c.

The same writer thus moralises on the life of man, in a set of similes, as apposite as they are light and elegant:

> "Like to the falling of a star,
> Or as the flights of eagles are,
> Or like the fresh spring's gaudy hue,
> Or silver drops of morning dew,
> Or like a wind that chafes the flood,
> Or bubbles which on water stood:
> Even such is man, whose borrow'd light
> Is straight call'd in, and paid to night:—
> The wind blows out, the bubble dies,
> The spring entombed in autumn lies,
> The dew's dried up, the star is shot,
> The flight is past, and man forgot."

"The silver foam which the wind severs from the parted wave" is not more delightful and sparkling than this: the dove's downy pinion is not softer and smoother than the verse. We are too ready to condemn all the poetry of that day, as altogether old-fashioned, meagre, squalid, deformed, withered and wild in its attire, or as a race of unearthly monsters, like "grim visaged, comfortless despair," in ragged and lamb-like array, unmanageable Pegasus, dragon winged and fish tailed. Sometimes it was often worse: a sylph-like form with Attic vest, with fairy feet, and the butterfly's gaudy wings. The poet was supposed to have come, and had not left a single example of Phœbus with a cold; and the fable might be transferred to the more modern accounts of Beaumont and Fletcher's Beaumont died at the age of five and twenty. One of them was engaged in Bacon's play to Philaster, who threatens to cane him if—

"'Tis not a life;
'Tis but a piece of childhood thrown away."

But here was youth, genius, aspiring hope, growing reputation, cut off like a flower in its summer-pride, or like "the lily on its stalk green," which makes us repine at fortune and almost at nature, that seems to set so little store by their greatest favourites. The life of poets is, or ought to be (judging of it from the light it lends to ours,) a golden dream, full of brightness and sweetness, "lapt in Elysium;" and it gives one a reluctant pang to see the splendid vision, by which they are attended in their path of glory, fade like a vapour, and their sacred heads laid low in ashes, before the sand of common mortals has run out. Fletcher too was prematurely cut off by the plague. Raphael died at four-and-thirty, and Correggio at forty. Who can help wishing that they had lived to the age of Michael Angelo and Titian? Shakspeare might have lived another half century, enjoying fame and repose, "now that his task was smoothly done," listening to the music of his name, and better still, of his own thoughts, without minding Rymer's abuse of "the tragedies of the last age." His native stream of Avon would then have flowed with softer murmurs to the ear, and his pleasant birthplace, Stratford, would in that case have worn even a more gladsome smile than it does, to the eye of fancy!—Poets, however, have a sort of privileged after-life, which does not fall to the common lot; the rich and mighty are nothing but while they are living; their power ceases with them: but "the sons of memory, the great heirs of fame," leave the best part of what was theirs, their thoughts, their verse, what they most delighted and prided themselves in, behind them—imperishable, incorruptible, immortal!—Sir John Beaumont (the brother of our dramatist), whose loyal and religious effusions are not worth much, very feelingly laments his brother's untimely death in an epitaph upon him:

"Thou shouldst have followed me, but Death (to blame)
Miscounted years, and measured age by fame;
So dearly hast thou bought thy precious lines,
Their praise grew swiftly; so thy life declines,

Thy Muse, the hearer's Queen, the readers Love,
All ears, all hearts (but Death's) could please and move."

Beaumont's verses addressed to Ben Jonson at the Mermaid are a pleasing record of their friendship, and of the way in which they "fleeted the time carelessly" as well as studiously "in the golden age" of our poetry:

Lines sent from the country with two unfinished Comedies, which deferred their mirth till [illegible] at the Mermaid.

"The sun which doth the greatest comfort bring
To absent friends, because the self same thing
They know they see, however absent, is
Here our best day maker, (forgive me this,
It is our country style that rules warm shine
Like mad stream of your full Mermaid wine:
Oh, we have water next we come to you,
Drink apt to [illegible]
[illegible]
With fustian metaphors to stuff the brain:
Think wit, one dram out of a man's invention fades,
Two cups had quite spoil'd Homer's Iliads
This report that will find out Sutcliffe's wit,
Like wrong he will, and make him write worse yet:
Fill'd with such moisture in most grievous qualms*
Did Robert Wisdom write his sin'ring psalms:
And so may I do this and ay yet I think
It is a potion strives down to drink
By [illegible] poets to be poets from fields.
Must [illegible] when we made sets to knights;
[illegible]
[illegible]

. . . . . .

Methinks [illegible]
Since I saw you, for wit is like a rest
[illegible]
[illegible]
Do [illegible]
[illegible]
As if that every one from whom they came
Had [illegible]
And [illegible]

* [illegible]
"[illegible]
[illegible]

Of his dull life; then when there hath been thrown
Wit able enough to justify the town
For three days past, wit that might warrant be
For the whole city to talk foolishly,
Till that were cancell'd; and when that was gone,
We left an air behind us, which alone
Was able to make the two next companies
Right witty, though but downright fools more wise."

I shall not in this place repeat Marlowe's celebrated song 'Come live with me and be my love,' nor Sir Walter Raleigh's no less celebrated answer to it (they may both be found in Walton's 'Complete Angler,' accompanied with scenery and remarks worthy of them); but I may quote, as a specimen of the high and romantic tone in which the poets of this age thought and spoke of each other, the 'Vision upon the Conceipt of the Faëry Queen,' understood to be by Sir Walter Releigh:

"Methought I saw the grave where Laura lay,
Within that temple, where the vestal flame
Was wont to burn, and passing by that way
To see that buried dust of living fame,
Whose tomb fair Love, and fairer Virtue kept.
All suddenly I saw the Faery Queen:
At whose approach the soul of Petrarch wept;
And from thenceforth those Graces were not seen,
For they this Queen attended, in whose stead
Oblivion laid him down on Laura's hearse.
Hereat the hardest stones were seen to bleed,
And groans of buried ghosts the heavens did pierce,
Where Homer's spright did tremble all for grief,
And curst th' access of that celestial thief."

A higher strain of compliment cannot well be conceived than this, which raises your idea even of that which it disparages in the comparison, and makes you feel that nothing could have torn the writer from his idolatrous enthusiasm for Petrarch and his Laura's tomb, but Spenser's magic verses and diviner 'Faëry Queen'—the one lifted above mortality, the other brought from the skies!

The name of Drummond of Hawthornden is in a manner entwined in cypher with that of Ben Jonson. He has not done himself or Jonson any credit by his account of their conversa-

tion; but his sonnets are in the highest degree elegant, harmonious, and striking. It appears to me that they are more in the manner of Petrarch than any others that we have, with a certain inferiority in the sentiment, an occasional glitter of thought, and antithetical terseness of expression. The reader may judge for himself from a few examples.

"I know that all beneath the moon decays,
And what by mortals in this world is wrought
In time's great period shall return to nought;
That fairest states have fatal nights and days.
I know that all the Muse's heavenly lays,
With toil of spright which are so dearly bought,
As idle sounds of few or none are sought;
That there is nothing grieves me more than praise.
I know that beauty is but tickle pain and flower.
To which one moon oft ebb and flow affords;
That all our joys are but mere dreams or words,
Where sense and will bring reason's pow'r.
Know what I list, this all can not me move,
But that, alas! I both must write and love."

Another:—

"Fair moon, who with thy cold and silver shine
Mak'st sweet the heart of the careful lover,
Delighting thy watchful eye with sundry shame,
Which Phœbus' face with his too much light;
Be it permitted to the Heavens of thy shrine
By the sacred Heavens' sovereignty,
That as thy sister went for Latmian love,
In grass to feed her lovely goat;
It may be that thou may'st give some further,
And grant to me, that for my sovereign love
Since first I spied the sweet of all mine eyes, she was
That holds the golden rod and mortal chain;
Now while she sleeps, and I for mine do mow
The careful cares that do environ my woe."

This is the eleventh sonnet; the twelfth is full of [illegible] and forced conceits, without any sentiment at all; such as calling the sun "the goodly eye of the stars," "the enamoler of the moon," and "the Apparel of the flowers." This is as bad as

* His mistress.

Cowley or Sir Philip Sidney. Here is one that is worth a million of such quaint devices:

"*To the Nightingale.*

Dear chorister, who from these shadows sends*,
Ere that the blushing morn dare show her light,
Such sad lamenting strains, that night attends
(Become all ear†) stars stay to hear thy plight.
If one whose grief even reach of thought transcends,
Who ne'er (not in a dream) did taste delight,
May thee importune who like case pretends,
And seem'st to joy in woe, in woe's despite:
Tell me (so may thou milder fortune try,
And long, long sing!) for what thou thus complains,*
Since winter's gone, and sun in dappled sky
Enamour'd smiles on woods and flow'ry plains?
The bird, as if my questions did her move,
With trembling wings sigh'd forth, 'I love, I love.'"

Or if a mixture of the Della Cruscan style be allowed to enshrine the true spirit of love and poetry, we have it in the following address to the river Forth, on which his mistress had embarked:

"Slide soft, fair Forth, and make a crystal plain,
Cut your white locks, and on your foamy face
Let not a wrinkle be, when you embrace
The boat that earth's perfection doth contain.
Winds wonder, and through wondering hold your peace,
Or if that you your hearts cannot restrain
From sending sighs, feeling a lover's case,
Sigh, and in her fair hair yourselves enchain.
Or take these sighs, which absence makes arise
From my oppressed breast, and fill the sails.
Or some sweet breath new brought from Paradise.
The floods do smile, love o'er the winds prevails,
And yet huge waves arise; the cause is this,
The ocean strives with Forth the boat to kiss."

This to the English reader will express the very soul of Petrarch, the molten breath of sentiment converted into the glassy essence of a set of glittering but still graceful conceits.

"The fly that sips treacle is lost in the sweets," and the critic

* Scotch for send'st: for complain'st, &c.
† "I was all ear;" see Milton's 'Comus.'

that tastes poetry "ruin meets." His feet are clogged with its honey, and his eyes blinded with its beauties; and he forgets his proper vocation, which is to buzz and sting. I am afraid of losing my way in Drummond's "sugar'd sweetness:" and have once ruined more than once to break off abruptly: but another and another tempts the rash hand and curious eye, which I am loth not to give, and I give it accordingly: for if I did not write these Lectures to please myself, I am at least sure I should please nobody else. In fact, I conceive that what I have undertaken to do in this and former cases, is merely to read over a set of authors with the audience, as I would do with a friend, to point out a favourite passage, to explain an objection; or if a remark or a theory occurs, to state it in illustration of the subject, but neither to stun him nor puzzle myself with pedantic rules and pragmatical formulas of criticism that can do no good to anybody. I do not come to the task with a pair of compasses or a ruler in my pocket, to see whether a poem is round or square, or to measure its mechanical dimensions, like a metre and alnager of poetry: it is not in my bond to look after excisable articles or contraband wares, or to exact severe penalties and forfeitures for trifling oversights, or to give formal notice of violent breaches of the three unities of geography and chronology; or to distribute printed stamps and poetical licences (with blanks to be filled up) at Mount Parnassus. I do not come armed from top to toe with critical manuals, with glossaries and indexes, to adjust the spelling or reform the metre, or to prove by everlasting contradiction and querulous impatience, that former commentators did not know the meaning of their author, any more than I do, who am angry at them only because I am out of humour with myself and all the genius of poetry lay buried under the rubbish of the mind: and the critic was the dwarf enchanter who was to release its airy form from being stuck through with blundering points and misplaced commas; or to prevent its vital powers from being worn away and consumed, letter by letter, in tedious minutiæ of the lower proof. I do not think that is the way to divert "the gentle craft" of poesy, either to myself or to others: I will not be a literal commentator on its spirit; which is not discoverable by rule, and is a very tender plant, and liable to

searches of antiquarianism, is no longer itself, "a phœnix gazed by all." At least, so it appeared to me; it is for others to judge whether I was right or wrong. In a word, I have endeavoured to feel what was good, and to "give a reason for the faith that was in me," when necessary, and when in my power. This is what I have done, and what I must continue to do.

To return to Drummond.—I cannot but think that his sonnets come as near as almost any others to the perfection of this kind of writing, which should embody a sentiment, and every shade of a sentiment, as it varies with time and place and humour, with the extravagance or lightness of a momentary impression, and should, when lengthened out into a series, form a history of the wayward moods of the poet's mind, the turns of his fate; and imprint the smile or frown of his mistress in indelible characters on the scattered leaves. I will give the two following, and have done with this author:

"In vain I haunt the cold and silver springs,
To quench the fever burning in my veins:
In vain (love's pilgrim) mountains, dales, and plains
I over-run; vain help long absence brings.
In vain, my friends, your counsel me constrains
To fly, and place my thoughts on other things.
Ah, like the bird that fired hath her wings,
The more I move the greater are my pains.
Desire, alas! desire a Zeuxis new,
From th' orient borrowing gold, from western skies
Heavenly cinnabar, sets before my eyes
In every place her hair, sweet look and hue;
That fly, run, rest I, all doth prove but vain;
My life lies in those eyes which have me slain."

The other is a direct imitation of Petrarch's description of the bower where he first saw Laura:

"Alexis, here she stay'd among these pines,
Sweet hermitress, she did alone repair:
Here did she spread the treasure of her hair,
More rich than that brought from the Colchian mires;
Here sat she by these musked eglantines;
The happy flowers seem yet the print to bear:
Her voice did sweeten here thy sugar'd lines,
To which winds, trees, beasts, birds, did lend an ear.
She here me first perceiv'd, and here a morn
Of bright carnations did o'erspread her face:

Here did she sigh, here first my hopes were born,
Here first I got a pledge of promised grace;
But ah! who serves to have been made happy so,
Sith past possession double the new woe?"

I should, on the whole, prefer Drummond's sonnets to Spenser's; and they leave Sydney's, picking their way through verbal intricacies and "thorny queaches," at an immeasurable distance behind. Drummond's other poems have great though not equal merit; and he may be fairly set down as one of our old English classics.

Ben Jonson's detached poetry I like much, as indeed I do all about him, except when he degraded himself by "the laborious foolery" of some of his farcical characters, which he could not deal with sportively, and only made stupid and pedantic. I have been blamed for what I have said more than once, in disparagement of Ben Jonson's comic talents; but I trust he was himself aware of his infirmity, and has (in my judgment) alluded to it in the following speech of Crites in "Cynthia's Revels:"

"O, how do you take a thing in me!
If it were true, [that] this day my muse's
Above the strength of fifty, [I] bid down to stoop,
What covert [might] I find out in my spirit
(There [were] such) to lay hold upon
Some humour, [or] some passion, which might [seem]
Or [with] the [time's] deformity, or [mine own]
[To] the [times'] virtue, [fit] my invention
Is now [to] [be] [employed]
Why [will] [you] [have] [me] [write] [a] [comedy]
[Or] [a] [satire]
[To] [the] [people]
[For] [the] [stage]
[That] [I] [may] [please]
[Or] [not] [please]
[Or] [both]
[Or] [neither], &c."

Ben Jonson himself, who was not easily satisfied, could not appreciate this [illegible]

* Cynthia's Revels, Act v. Sc. 1.

objections does not prove that he was not conscious of them himself, but the contrary. The greatest egotists are those whom it is impossible to offend, because they are wholly and incurably blind to their own defects; or if they could be made to see them, would instantly convert them into so many beauty-spots and ornamental graces. Ben Jonson's fugitive and lighter pieces are not devoid of the characteristic merits of that class of composition; but still often in the happiest of them, there is a specific gravity in the author's pen, that sinks him to the bottom of his subject, though buoyed up for a time with art and painted plumes, and produces a strange mixture of the mechanical and fanciful, of poetry and prose, in his songs and odes. For instance, one of his most airy effusions is the 'Triumph of his Mistress:' yet there are some lines in it that seem inserted almost by way of burlesque. It is, however, well worth repeating.

"See the chariot at hand here of love
Wherin my lady rideth!
Each that draws it is a swan or a dove;
And well the car love guideth!
As she goes all hearts do duty
Unto her beauty:
And enamour'd, do wish so they might
But enjoy such a sight,
That they still were to run by her side,
Through swords, through seas, whither she would ride.
Do but look on her eyes, they do light
All that love's world compriseth!
Do but look on her hair, it is bright
As love's star when it riseth!
Do but mark, her forehead's smoother
Than words that soothe her:
And from her arch'd brows, such a grace
Sheds itself through the face,
As alone there triumphs to the life
All the gain, all the good of the elements' strife.

Have you seen but a bright lily glow,
Before rude hands have touch'd it?
Ha' you mark'd but the fall of the snow
Before the soil hath smutch'd it?
Ha' you felt *the wool of bever?*
Or swan's down ever?

Or have smelt o' the bud o' the briar?
Or [illegible]?
Or have tasted the bag of the bee?
Oh, so white! Oh, so soft! Oh, so sweet is she!'

His 'Discourse with Cupid,' which follows, is infinitely delicate and *piquant*, and without one single blemish. It is a perfect "nest of spicery."

"Noblest Charis, you that are
Both my fortune and my star!
And do govern more my blood,
Than the various moon the flood!
Hear, what late discourse of you,
Love and I have had; and true.
'Mongst my Muses finding me,
[illegible]
Set, and to this softer strain;
[illegible]
Thus to me in language grieved,
By description, but my mother!
So nam'd Homer, and not err'd;
So Anacreon, in his lyric,
Of her face, an humble rise,
Just about her sparkling eyes,
Both her brows bent like my bow.
By her looks I do her know,
Which you call my shafts. And see!
Such my mother's beauties be.
As your cruelty excites boys
In her pricks, so doth her joys;
Such as oft I wanton with
And do love her countenance,
Have your lips and cheeks the hues of kisses,
Where you teem my more ruddier blesses,
Ripen'd with a sweeter sweet,
Than when Summer's kindest heat
Now her warm and downy hand,
With [illegible]
Is my mother's fall'n part of man
Love [illegible]
And [illegible]
Let [illegible]
Would I [illegible] wanton
After [illegible]
To my [illegible] Here very soon

With my mother's is the same.'—
'I confess all,' I replied,
'And the glass hangs by her side,
And the girdle 'bout her waist,
All is Venus: save unchaste.
But, alas! thou seest the least
Of her good, who is the best
Of her sex; but could'st thou, Love,
Call to mind the forms that strove
For the apple, and those three
Make in one, the same were she.
For this beauty yet doth hide
Something more than thou hast spied.
Outward grace weak love beguiles:
She is Venus when she smiles,
But she's Juno when she walks,
And Minerva when she talks.'"

In one of the songs in 'Cynthia's Revels,' we find, amidst some very pleasing imagery, the origin of a celebrated line in modern poetry—

"Drip, drip, drip, drip, drip," &c.

This has not even the merit of originality, which is hard upon it. Ben Jonson had said two hundred years before,

"Oh, I could still
(Like melting snow upon some craggy hill)
Drop, drop, drop, drop,
Since nature's pride is now a wither'd daffodil."

His 'Ode to the Memory of Sir Lucius Cary and Sir H. Morrison' has been much admired, but I cannot but think it one of his most fantastical and perverse performances.

I cannot, for instance, reconcile myself to such stanzas as these:

"Of which we priests and poets say
Such truths as we expect for happy men,
And there he lives with memory; and Ben

The Stand.

Jonson, who sung this of him, ere he went
Himself to rest,

Or was a part of that full joy he meant
To have expres'
In this bright asterism;
Where it were friendship's selfish
(Were not his Love so long with us to tarry)
To separate these two,
Lights, the Dioscori;
And keep the one half from his Harry.
But fresh as is now the love
While that in Heaven's light on earth doth shine!

This seems as if because he cannot without difficulty write smoothly, he becomes rough and cracked in a spirit of defiance, like those persons who cannot behave well in company, and affect rudeness to show their contempt for the opinions of others.

His 'Epistles' are particularly good, equally full of strong sense and manly feeling. They show that he was not without friends, who were sincere to him, and by whom he was deservedly esteemed in return. The controversy started about his character is an idle one, carried on in the mere spirit of contradiction, as if he were either made up entirely of gall, or dipped in "the milk of human kindness." There is no necessity or ground to suppose either. He was no doubt a sturdy, plain-spoken, honest, well-disposed man, inclining more to the severe than the amiable side of things: but his good qualities, learning, talents, and convivial habits predominated over his defects of temper or manners; and these constituted a combination of character, even a little roughness or acidity, may relish to the palate; and olives may be served up with effect as well as sweetmeats. Ben Jonson, even by his quarrels and prejudices, 'lives in' seem to have been cased with the tough and lasting impenetrability for friendship—that was all in all to him. He was a man 'sufficient of himself,' and therefore the more self-dependent and good company: one of those stubborn fellows that, by your leave, is for you and no one else. He was open and unreserved, and wore his heart in his hand: he was as ready to quarrel as to be reconciled, and as much in earnest in the one as the other. He was a lover of his friends, and a hater of his enemies, and he has left us a picture of his own character in both. 'Epode to Master Lovel,' that 'Sonnet to Sidney,' and 'Ode to Master William Shakespeare,'

and his noble prose 'Eulogy on Lord Bacon,' in his disgrace, do a favourable one.

Among the best of these (perhaps the very best) is the 'Address to Sir Robert Wroth,' which, besides its manly moral sentiments, conveys a strikingly picturesque description of rural sports and manners at this interesting period:

"How blest art thou, canst love the country, Wroth,
Whether by choice, or fate, or both!
And though so near the city and the court,
Art ta'en with neither's vice nor sport:
That at great times, art no ambitious guest
Of sheriff's dinner, or of mayor's feast;
Nor com'st to view the better cloth of state,
The richer hangings, or the crown-plate;
Nor throng'st (when masquing is) to have a sight
Of the short bravery of the night;
To view the jewels, stuffs, the pains, the wit
There wasted, some not paid for yet!
But canst at home, in thy securer rest,
Live with unbought provision blest;
Free from proud porches or their gilded roofs,
'Mongst lowing heards and solid hoofs:
Along the curled woods and painted meads,
Through which a serpent river leads
To some cool courteous shade, which he calls his,
And makes sleep softer than it is!
Or if thou list the night in watch to break,
A-bed canst hear the loud stag speak,
In spring oft roused for their master's sport,
Who for it makes thy house his court;
Or with thy friends, the heart of all the year,
Divid'st upon the lesser deer;
In autumn, at the partrich mak'st a flight,
And giv'st thy gladder guests the sight;
And in the winter hunt'st the flying hare,
More for thy exercise than fare;
While all that follows, their glad ears apply
To the full greatness of the cry:
Or hawking at the river or the bush,
Or shooting at the greedy thrush,
Thou dost with some delight the day out-wear,
Although the coldest of the year!
The whilst the several seasons thou hast seen
Of flow'ry fields, of copses green,

The mowed meadows with the flocked sheep,
And feasts that clothier strangers keep.
The ripened ears yet humble in their height,
And furrows laden with their weight,
The apple-harvest that doth longer last;
The hogs return'd home fat from mast,
The woods cut out in log and trunk boughs made
A fire now, and fear'd [illegible]
Trees Pan and Sylvan love, and their rites,
Ceres' gifts in full flowed bounties,
And fleecy flocks with wanton mirth and cheer,
As nature smiles in every where.
Apollo [illegible] Heaven's eye resound,
Nor more the Muses [illegible] mount
The rocks and [illegible] singing an
([illegible])
Thy [illegible] welcome grace:
And [illegible]
Sing [illegible]
That [illegible]
The [illegible]
And [illegible]
Does [illegible] all leese,
Not [illegible]
Such [illegible]
With [illegible]
And [illegible] own content,
Strive, Wroth, to live long innocent.
[illegible]
[illegible]
Come [illegible]
The [illegible]
And [illegible]
And [illegible]
Let [illegible]
For every price in every jar,
And [illegible] breath,
[illegible]
[illegible]
And [illegible]
To [illegible] states,
And [illegible]
For [illegible] wealth,
Pur [illegible]
And [illegible] ea
Not [illegible]

Let thousands more go flatter vice, and win,
By being organs to great sin;
Get place and honour, and be glad to keep
The secrets that shall break their sleep:
And, so they ride in purple, eat in plate,
Though poison, think it a great fate.
But thou, my Wroth, if I can truth apply,
Shalt neither that nor this envy:
Thy peace is made; and, when man's state is well,
'Tis better, if he there can dwell.
God wisheth none should wrack on a strange shelf;
To him man's dearer than t' himself.
And howsoever, we may think things sweet,
He always gives what he knows meet;
Which who can use is happy: such be thou.
Thy morning's and thy evening's vow
Be thanks to him, and earnest prayer, to find
A body sound, with sounder mind;
To do thy country service, thyself right;
That neither want do thee affright,
Nor death; but when thy latest sand is spent,
Thou mayst think life a thing but lent."

Of all the poetical Epistles of this period, however, that of Daniel to the Countess of Cumberland, for weight of thought and depth of feeling, bears the palm. The reader will not peruse this effusion with less interest or pleasure, from knowing that it is a favourite with Mr. Wordsworth:

"He that of such a height hath built his mind,
And rear'd the dwelling of his thoughts so strong,
As neither fear nor hope can shake the frame
Of his resolved powers; nor all the wind
Of vanity or malice pierce to wrong
His settled peace, or to disturb the same:
What a fair seat hath he, from whence he may
The boundless wastes and wilds of man survey!
And with how free an eye doth he look down
Upon these lower regions of turmoil,
Where all the storms of passions mainly beat
On flesh and blood; where honour, pow'r, renown,
Are only gay afflictions, golden toil;
Where greatness stands upon as feeble feet
As frailty doth; and only great doth seem
To little minds, who do it so esteem.

He looks upon the mightiest monarch's wars
But only as on stately robberies;
Where evermore the fortune that prevails
Must be the right: the ill-succeeding mars
The fairest and the best-faced enterprize.
Great pirate Pompey lesser pirates quails:
Justice, he sees (as if seduced) still
Conspires with power, whose cause must not be ill.
He sees the face of right t'appear as manifold
As are the passions of uncertain man,
Who puts it in all colours, all attires,
To serve his ends, and make his courses hold.
He sees, that let deceit work what it can,
Plot and contrive base ways to high desires;
That the all-guiding Providence doth yet
All disappoint, and mocks this smoke of wit.
Nor is he moved with all the thunder-cracks
Of tyrants' threats, or with the surly brow
Of power, that proudly sits on others' crimes,
Charged with more crying sins than those he checks.
The storms of sad confusion, that may grow
Up in the present for the coming times,
Appal not him, that hath no side at all,
But of himself, and knows the worst can fall.
Although his heart (so near allied to earth)
Cannot but pity the perplexed state
Of troublous and distressed mortality,
That thus make way unto the ugly birth
Of their own sorrows, and do still beget
Affliction upon imbecility:
Yet seeing thus the course of things must run,
He looks thereon not strange, but as fore-done.
And whilst distraught ambition compasses,
And is encompassed; whilst as craft deceives,
And is deceived: whilst man doth ransack man,
And builds on blood, and rises by distress;
And th'inheritance of desolation leaves
To great-expecting hopes: he looks thereon,
As from the shore of peace, with unwet eye,
And bears no venture in impiety."

Michael Drayton's Poly-Olbion is a work of great length and of unabated freshness and vigour in itself, though the monotony of the subject tires the reader. He describes each place with the accuracy of a topographer, and the enthusiasm of a

poet, as if his muse were the very *genius loci*. His 'Heroical Epistles' are also excellent. He has a few lighter pieces, but none of exquisite beauty or grace. His mind is a rich marly soil that produces an abundant harvest, and repays the husbandman's toil; but few flaunting flowers, the garden's pride, grow in it, nor any poisonous weeds.

P. Fletcher's 'Purple Island' is nothing but a long enigma, describing the body of a man, with the heart and veins, and the blood circulating in them, under the fantastic designation of 'The Purple Island.'

The other poets whom I shall mention, and who properly belong to the age immediately following, were William Browne, Carew, Crashaw, Herrick, and Marvell. Browne was a pastoral poet, with much natural tenderness and sweetness, and a good deal of allegorical quaintness and prolixity. Carew was an elegant court-trifler. Herrick was an amorist, with perhaps more fancy than feeling, though he has been called by some the English Anacreon. Crashaw was a hectic enthusiast in religion and in poetry, and erroneous in both. Marvell deserves to be remembered as a true poet as well as patriot, not in the best of times. I will, however, give short specimens from each of these writers, that the reader may judge for himself, and be led by his own curiosity, rather than my recommendation, to consult the originals. Here is one by T. Carew:

"Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose:
For in your beauties, orient deep
These flow'rs, as in their causes, sleep.

Ask me no more, whither do stray
The golden atoms of the day;
For in pure love, Heaven did prepare
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more, whither doth haste
The nightingale, when May is past;
For in your sweet dividing throat
She winters, and keeps warm her note.

Ask me no more, where those stars light,
That downwards fall in dead of night;

For in your eyes they sit, and there
Fixed become as in their sphere.

Ask me no more, if east or west
The phœnix builds her spicy nest:
For unto you at last she flies,
And in your fragrant bosom dies."

'The Hue and Cry of Love,' 'The Epitaphs on Lady Mary Villiers,' and 'The Friendly Reproof to Ben Jonson for his Angry Farewell to the Stage,' are in the author's best manner. We may perceive, however, a frequent mixture of the superficial and commonplace, with far-fetched and improbable conceits.

Herrick is a writer who does not answer the expectations I had formed of him. He is in a manner a modern discovery, and [illegible] antiquity a recommendation. He is not trite and [illegible]. But neither is he [illegible]. He is a writer of epigrams, rather than lyrics. He has point and ingenuity, but I think little of the spirit of love or wine. From his frequent allusion to pearls and rubies, one might take him for a lapidary instead of a poet. One of his pieces is entitled

"*The Rock of Rubies, and the Quarry of Pearls.*

Some ask'd me where the rubies grew;
And nothing I did say
But with my finger pointed to
The lips of Julia.

Some ask'd me where the pearls did grow, and where,
Then spoke I to my girl,
To part her lips, and show me there
The quarries of the pearl.

Now this is making a petrifaction both of love and poetry.

His poems, from their number and size, are [illegible] the insects that play in the sun's beams;" that please for the eye of fancy, but leave no distinct impression on the memory. The two best are a translation of Anacreon, and a successful and spirited imitation of him.

"*The Wounded Cupid.*

Cupid, as he lay among
Roses, by a bee was stung.
Whereupon, in anger flying
To his mother, said thus, crying,
Help, oh help, your boy's a-dying!
And why, my pretty lad? said she.
Then, blubbering, replied he,
A winged snake has bitten me,
Which country-people call a bee.
At which she smiled; then with her hairs
And kisses drying up his tears,
Alas, said she, my wag! if this
Such a pernicious torment is;
Come, tell me then, how great 's the smart
Of those thou woundest with thy dart?"

'The Captive Bee, or the Little Filcher,' is his own:

"As Julia once a slumbering lay,
It chanced a bee did fly that way,
After a dew, or dew-like show'r,
To tipple freely in a flow'r.
For some rich flow'r he took the lip
Of Julia, and began to sip:
But when he felt he suck'd from thence
Honey, and in the quintessence,
He drank so much he scarce could stir;
So Julia took the pilferer.
And thus surpris'd, as filchers use,
He thus began himself to excuse:
Sweet lady-flow'r! I never brought
Hither the least one thieving thought;
But taking those rare lips of your's
For some fresh, fragrant, luscious flow'rs,
I thought I might there take a taste,
Where so much syrup run at waste;
Besides, know this, I never sting
The flow'r that gives me nourishing;
But with a kiss of thanks do pay
For honey that I bear away.
This said, he laid his little scrip
Of honey 'fore her ladyship;
And told her, as some tears did fall,
That that he took, and that was all.
At which she smil'd, and bid him go.

And take his bag: but thus much know,
Who more to carry a purse is so,
He should not, lest for this he crave
Honey enough to fill his grave."

Of Marvell I have spoken with such praise as appears to me his due, on another occasion; but the public are deaf, except to proof or to their own prejudices, and I will therefore give an example of the sweetness and power of his verse.

"*The Coy Mistress.*

Had we but world enough and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down and think which way
To walk and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Should'st rubies find: I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood,
And you should if you please refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow.
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest.
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.
But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor in thy marble vault shall sound
My echoing song: then worms shall try
That long preserved virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust.
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.
Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew

And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may;
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour,
Than languish in his slow-chapp'd pow'r.
Let us roll all our strength, and all
Our sweetness up into one ball;
And tear our pleasures with rough strife,
Through the iron gates of life.
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run."

In Browne's 'Pastorals,' notwithstanding the weakness and prolixity of his general plan, there are repeated examples of single lines and passages of extreme beauty and delicacy, both of sentiment and description, such as the following Picture of Night:

"Clamour grew dumb, unheard was shepherd's song,
And silence girt the woods: no warbling tongue
Talk'd to the echo; satyrs broke their dance,
And all the upper world lay in a trance,
Only the curled streams soft chidings kept;
And little gales that from the green leaf swept
Dry summer's dust, in fearful whisperings stirr'd,
As loth to waken any singing bird."

Poetical beauties of this sort are scattered, not sparingly, over the green lap of nature through almost every page of our author's writings. His description of the squirrel hunted by mischievous boys, of the flowers stuck in the windows like the hues of the rainbow, and innumerable others, might be quoted.

His 'Philarete' (the fourth song of the 'Shepherd's Pipe') has been said to be the origin of 'Lycidas;' but there is no resemblance, except that both are pastoral elegies for the loss of a friend. 'The Inner Temple Mask' has also been made the foundation of 'Comus,' with as little reason. But so it is: if an author is once detected in borrowing, he will be suspected of plagiarism ever after; and every writer that finds an ingenious or partial editor, will be made to set up his claim to originality against him. A more serious charge of this kind has been urged

agatos' the principal character in 'Paradise Lost' (that of Satan), which is said to have been taken from Marino, an Italian poet. Of this we may be able to form some judgment, by a comparison with Crashaw's translation of Marino's 'Sospetto d'Herode.' The description of Satan attached to it is given in the following stanzas :—

> 'Below the bottom of the great abyss
> There where one centre reconciles all things
> The worst [illegible] points [illegible]
> Most [illegible]
> A [illegible]
> His [illegible]
> He [illegible]
> Lost [illegible]
>
> His [illegible]
> He fi[illegible]
> And [illegible]
> A [illegible]
> The [illegible]
> With [illegible]re;
> And [illegible]
> Seven [illegible]
>
> His [illegible]
> Startle the dull air with a dismal cold;
> [illegible]
> Of [illegible]
> Less [illegible]
> Of [illegible]
> His [illegible]an
> Deep [illegible]
>
> His [illegible]
> Pro[illegible]
> With [illegible]
> The [illegible]
> Less [illegible]
> Of [illegible]
> And [illegible]
> With [illegible]'

This [illegible] equal the grandeur of Milton's description :

—— "His form had not yet lost
All her original brightness, nor appear'd
Less than archangel ruin'd and the excess
Of glory obscured."

Milton has got rid of the horns and tail, the vulgar and physical insignia of the devil, and clothed him with other greater and intellectual terrors, reconciling beauty and sublimity, and converting the grotesque and deformed into the ideal and classical Certainty, Milton's mind rose superior to all others in this respect, on the outstretched wings of philosophic contemplation, in not confounding the depravity of the will with physical distortion, or supposing that the distinctions of good and evil were only to be subjected to the gross ordeal of the senses. In the subsequent stanzas, we however find the traces of some of Milton's boldest imagery, though its effect be injured by the incongruous mixture above stated.

"Struck with these great concurrences of things,*
Symptoms so deadly unto death and him:
Fain would he have forgot what fatal strings
Eternally bind each rebellious limb,
He shook himself, and spread his spacious wings,
Which like two bosom'd sails† embrace the dim
Air, with a dismal shade, but all in vain:
Of sturdy adamant is his strong chain.

While thus heav'n's counsels, by the low
Footsteps of their effects, he traced too well,
He tost his troubled eyes, embers that glow
Now with new rage, and wax too hot for hell.
With his foul claws he fenced his furrow'd brow,
And gave a ghastly shriek, whose horrid yell
Ran trembling through the hollow vaults of night."

The poet adds—

"The while his twisted tail he gnaw'd for spite."

There is no keeping in this. This action of meanness and mere vulgar spite, common to the most contemptible creatures.

* Alluding to the fulfilment of the prophecies and the birth of the Messiah
† "He spreads his sail-broad vans."—'Par. Lost,' b. ii., l. 927.

takes away from the terror and power just ascribed to the prince of Hell, and implied in the nature of the consequences attributed to his every movement of mind or body. Satan's soliloquy to himself is more beautiful and more in character at the same time:

> "Art thou not Lucifer? he to whom the droves
> Of stars that gild the azure in chaste were given?
> The leader of the legions, winged doves?
> The first and the first-born scale of heaven?
> Look at what perfect the master-plot moves,
> Reverently circled by the lesser seven:
> Such cuts across the chaos that from their eyes
> Opposite the common points of the skies.
> All watches were struck [illegible] to mark time's eyes
> With [illegible] it shows," &c.

This [illegible] is also true pathos and literature: [illegible] interests the mind, and affects it powerfully with the [illegible] of [illegible] and happiness [illegible] with the loss of virtue; but [illegible] the horrors and [illegible] of the brute-demon, imagination [illegible] to ascend to the Son of the morning, nor be deposited by [illegible] from weal to woe, which it cannot without a violent effort [illegible].

In [illegible] Cruelty, the chief minister of Satan, the [illegible] considerable approach to Milton's description of Death at the [illegible] of hell-gates:

> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> At last her listening ears the noise of rakes,
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> "[illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]

* See [illegible] Book ii. of 'Paradise Lost.'

> The walls' inexorable steel, no hand
> Of time, or teeth of hungry ruin fears."

On the whole, this poem, though Milton has undoubtedly availed himself of many ideas and passages in it, raises instead of lowering our conception of him, by showing how much more he added to it than he has taken from it.

Crashaw's translation of Strada's description of the contention between a nightingale and a musician, is elaborate and spirited, but not equal to Ford's version of the same story in his 'Lover's Melancholy.' One line may serve as a specimen of delicate quaintness, and of Crashaw's style in general :

> "And with a quavering coyness tastes the strings."

Sir Philip Sidney is a writer for whom I cannot acquire a taste. As Mr. Burke said, "he could not love the French Republic"—so I may say, that I cannot love 'The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia,' with all my good-will to it. It will not do for me, however, to imitate the summary petulance of the epigrammatist :

> "The reason why I cannot tell,
> But I don't like thee, Dr. Fell."

I must give my reasons, "on compulsion," for not speaking well of a person like Sir Philip Sidney—

> "The soldier's, scholar's, courtier's eye, tongue, sword,
> The glass of fashion, and the mould of form;"

the splendour of whose personal accomplishments, and of whose wide-spread fame, was, in his life-time,

> —— "Like a gate of steel,
> Fronting the sun, that renders back
> His figure and his heat"

a writer, too, who was universally read and enthusiastically admired for a century after his death, and who has been admired with scarce less enthusiastic, but with a more distant homage, for another century, after ceasing to be read.

We have lost the art of reading, or the privilege of writing, voluminously, since the days of Addison. Learning no longer weaves the interminable page with patient drudgery, nor ignorance pores over it with implicit faith. As authors multiply in number, books diminish in size; we cannot now, as formerly, swallow libraries whole in a single folio: solid quarto has given place to slender duodecimo, and the dingy letter-press contracts its dimensions, and retreats before the white, unsullied, faultless margin. Modern authorship is become a species of stenography: we contrive even to read by proxy. We skim the cream of prose without any trouble; we get at the quintessence of poetry without loss of time. The staple commodity, the coarse, heavy, dirty, unwieldy bullion of books, is driven out of the market of learning, and the intercourse of the literary world is carried on, and the credit of the great capitalists sustained by, the flimsy circulating medium of Magazines and reviews. Those who are chiefly concerned in catering for the taste of others, and serving up critical opinions in a compendious, elegant, and portable form, are not forgetful of themselves: they are not scrupulously solicitous, idly inquisitive, about the real merits, the *bona fide* contents of the works they are deputed to appraise and value, any more than the reading public who employ them. They look no farther for the contents of the work than the title-page, and pronounce a peremptory decision on its merits or defects by a glance at the name and party of the writer. This state of polite letters seems to admit of improvement in only one respect, which is to go a step farther, and write for the amusement and edification of the world, accounts of works that were never either written or read at all, and to cry up or abuse the authors by name, though they have no existence but in the critic's invention. This would save a great deal of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] and we should arrive at [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible]

At the time when Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia was written, those middle men, the critics, were not known. The author and

reader came into immediate contact, and seemed never tired of each other's company. We are more fastidious and dissipated the effeminacy of modern taste would, I am afraid, shrink back affrighted at the formidable sight of this once popular work, which is about as long (*horresco referens!*) as all Walter Scott's novels put together; but besides its size and appearance, it has, I think, other defects of a more intrinsic and insuperable nature. It is to me one of the greatest monuments of the abuse of intellectual power upon record. It puts one in mind of the court dresses and preposterous fashions of the time, which are grown obsolete and disgusting. It is not romantic, but scholastic; not poetry, but casuistry; not nature, but art, and the worst sort of art, which thinks it can do better than nature. Of the number of fine things that are constantly passing through the author's mind, there is hardly one that he has not contrived to spoil, and to spoil purposely and maliciously, in order to aggrandize our idea of himself. Out of five hundred folio pages, there are hardly, I conceive, half a dozen sentences expressed simply and directly, with the sincere desire to convey the image implied, and without a systematic interpolation of the wit, learning, ingenuity, wisdom, and everlasting impertinence of the writer, so as to disguise the object, instead of displaying it in its true colours and real proportions. Every page is with "centric and eccentric scribbled o'er;" his muse is tattooed and tricked out like an Indian goddess. He writes a court-hand, with flourishes like a schoolmaster; his figures are wrought in chain-stitch. All his thoughts are forced and painful births, and may be said to be delivered by the Cæsarean operation. At last, they become distorted and rickety in themselves; and before they have been cramped and twisted and swaddled into lifelessness and deformity. Imagine a writer to have great natural talents, great powers of memory and invention, an eye for nature, a knowledge of the passions, much learning, and equal industry: but that he is so full of a consciousness of all this, and so determined to make the reader conscious of it at every step, that he becomes a complete intellectual coxcomb, or nearly so;—that he never lets a casual observation pass without perplexing it with an endless, running commentary, that he never states a feeling without so many

circumstances, without so many interlineations and parenthetical remarks as will that can be stated in facts and anticipations of all that can be said against it, and that to be overcome, as a fact without grounds—many circumstances that explain away so many things "as it is like or not like that you see the main cure of the story in its minute ramifications and intersections; and we may form some faint idea of 'The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia,' which is spun with great labour out of the author's brains, and hangs like a large cobweb over the face of nature! This is not, as far as I can judge, an exaggerated description: but as near the truth as I can make it. The proofs are not far to seek. Take the first one you open the volume anywhere and read. I will, however, turn to one of the most beautiful passages, near the beginning, I believe, with the subject matter of which the noblest associations are connected, and distinguished by the affectation of the style, and the opportunities and vacancy of the writer's mind. The passage I allude to is the description of Arcadia.

"So on the earth, by way of resemblance, one thing [illegible]

One would think the very name might have lulled his senses to delightful repose in some still, lonely valley, and have laid the restless spirit of Gothic quaintness, witticism, and conceit in the lap of classic elegance and pastoral simplicity. Here are images, too, of touching beauty and everlasting truth that needed nothing but to be simply and nakedly expressed to have made a picture equal (nay superior) to the allegorical representation of 'The Four Seasons of Life,' by Giorgione. But no! He cannot let his imagination, or that of the reader, dwell for a moment on the beauty or power of the real object. He thinks nothing is done, unless it is his doing. He must officiously and gratuitously interpose between you and the subject, as the Cicerone of Nature, distracting the eye and the mind by continual uncalled-for interruptions, analyzing, dissecting, disjointing, murdering everything, and reading a pragmatical, self-sufficient lecture over the dead body of nature. The moving-spring of his mind is not sensibility or imagination, but dry, literal, unceasing craving after intellectual excitement, which is indifferent to pleasure or pain, to beauty or deformity, and likes to owe everything to its own perverse efforts, rather than the sense of power in other things. It constantly interferes to perplex and neutralize. It never leaves the mind in a wise passiveness. In the infancy of taste, the froward pupils of art took nature to pieces, as spoiled children do a watch, to see what was in it. After taking it to pieces they could not, with all their cunning, put it together again, so as to restore circulation to the heart, or its living hue to the face! The quaint and pedantic style here objected to was not, however, the natural growth of untutored fancy, but an artificial excrescence transferred from logic and rhetoric to poetry. It was not owing to the excess of imagination, but of the want of it, that is, to the predominance of the mere understanding or dialectic faculty over the imaginative and the sensitive. It is, in fact, poetry degenerating at every step into prose, sentiment entangling itself into a controversy, from the habitual leaven of polemics and casuistry in the writer's mind. The poet insists upon matters of fact from the beauty or grandeur that accompanies them; our prose-poet insists upon them because they are matters of fact, and buries the beauty and grandeur in a heap

of common rubbish, "like two grains of wheat in a bushel of chaff." The true poet illustrates or ornaments or uses the fantastic pretender only because he is not easy, till he can translate everything out of itself into something else. Imagination consists in connecting some object or sentiment, which has the same feeling or set of associations in common with another, in a higher or more striking degree; the quaint or sophistic style consists in comparing one thing to another by the mere process of abstraction, and the more direct and naked the comparison, the less of harmony or congruity there is in it, the more wire-drawn and ambiguous the link of generalization by which objects are brought together, the greater is the triumph of the false and fanciful style. There was a marked instance of the difference in the lines from Burns in which I have already quoted, and which as they are alternate examples of the extremes of both on the same subject, in the same short poem, it is to be hoping investigating. The concluding simile of female sadness and sweetness, he says—

> "How can my poor heart be glad,
> When absent from my sailor lad?
> How can I the thought forbear,
> Like him to plough the sea?"

Now the word "plough" is a very true and beautiful image of the motion of a ship, and [illegible] we have [illegible]

stands still; or even taking it for granted in the literal and scientific sense, we are where we were; it does not enhance the passion to be expressed: we have no love for the smell of nard in the fire, but we have an old, a long cherished one from infancy, for the bud of the briar. Sentiment, as Mr. Burke said of nobility, is a thing of inveterate prejudice; and cannot be created, as some people (learned and unlearned) are inclined to suppose, out of fancy or out of anything by the wit of man. The artificial and natural style do not alternate in this way in the 'Arcadia:' the one is but the Helot, the eyeless drudge of the other. Thus even in the above passage, which is comparatively beautiful and simple in its general structure, we have "the bleating oratory" of lambs, as if anything could be more unlike oratory than the bleating of lambs. We have a young shepherdess knitting, whose hands keep time not to her voice, but to her "voice-music," which introduces a foreign and questionable distinction, merely to perplex the subject; we have meadows enamelled with all the sorts of "eye-pleasing flowers," as if it were necessary to inform the reader that flowers pleased the eye, or as if they did not please any other sense: we have valleys refreshed "with *silver* streams," an epithet that has nothing to do with the refreshment here spoken of: we have "an accompaniable solitariness and a civil wildness," which are a pair of very laboured antitheses; in fine, we have "want of store, and store of want."

Again, the passage describing the shipwreck of Pyrochles has been much and deservedly admired: yet it is not free from the same inherent faults.

"But a little way off they saw the mast (of the vessel) whose proud height now lay along, like a widow having lost her mate, of whom she held her honour." [This needed explanation.] "But upon the mast they saw a young man (at least if it were a man) bearing show of about eighteen years of age, who sat (as on horseback) having nothing upon him but his shirt, which being wrought with blue silk and gold, had a kind of resemblance to the sea," [this is a sort of alliteration in natural history,] "on which the sun [then near his western home] did shoot some of his beams. His hair [which the young men of Greece used to wear very long] was stirred up and down with the wind, which seemed to have a sport to play with it, as the sea had to kiss his feet; himself full of admirable beauty, set forth by the strangeness both of his seat and gesture; for, holding his head up full of unmoved majesty, he held a

sweetly it was his fan and, when often he waved about his crown, as though he would have the world in that extremity."

Except the quaintness of alliteration, antithesis, and metaphysical conceit could be weeded out of this passage, there is hardly a more tender one to be found in prose or poetry.

Here is one more passage marred in the making. A shepherd is supposed to say of his mistress,

"Certainly, as her eyelids are more pleasant to behold than two white kids climbing up a fair tree, and browsing on its tenderest branches, and yet are nothing compared to the day-shining stars contained in them; and as her breath is more sweet than a gentle south-west wind, which comes creeping over flowery fields and shadowed waters in the extreme heat of summer, and yet is nothing compared to the honey-flowing speech that breath doth carry; [illegible] when they have seen her, [illegible] is to be [illegible] laid up delightfully in that best builded fold."

Now here are images of singular beauty and of Eastern originality and daring, followed up with enigmatical or unmeaning common-places, because he never knows when to leave off, and thinks he can never be too wise or too dull for his reader. He loads his prose Pegasus like a pack-horse, with all that comes, and with a number of little trifling circumstances, that fall off, [illegible] up by the way. He [illegible] prose, [illegible] that [illegible] The [illegible] Arcadia [illegible] The [illegible] world. It [illegible] better than that of [illegible] Love's Labour's Lost."

"M[illegible]

[illegible]

aut boldly my lamentation, for while she reads you your cries will be music. Say then (O happy messenger of a most unhappy message) that the too soon born and too late dying creature, which dares not speak, no, not look, no not scarcely think (as from his miserable self unto her heavenly highness) only presumes to desire thee (in the time that her eyes and voice do exalt thee) to say, and in this manner to say, not from him, oh, no, that were not fit, but of him, thus much unto her sacred judgment. O you, the only honour to women, to men the admiration, you that being armed by love, defy him that armed you in this high estate wherein you have placed me" [*i. e.* the letter], "yet let me remember him to whom I am bound for bringing me to your presence: and let me remember him, who (since he is yours, how mean soever he be) it is reason you have an account of him. The wretch (yet your wretch) though with languishing steps runs fast to his grave; and will you suffer a temple (how poorly built soever, but yet a temple of your deity) to be rased? But he dieth: it is most true, he dieth: and he in whom you live, to obey you, dieth. Whereof though he plain, he doth not complain: for it is a harm, but no wrong, which he hath received. He dies, because in woeful language all his senses tell him, that such is your pleasure: for if you will not that he live, alas, alas, what followeth, what followeth of the most ruined Dorus, but his end? End, then, evil destined Dorus, end; and end, thou woeful letter, end; for it sufficeth her wisdom to know, that her heavenly will shall be accomplished."—Lib. ii., p. 117.

This style relishes neither of the lover nor the poet. Nine-tenths of the work are written in this manner. It is in the very manner of those books of gallantry and chivalry, which, with the labyrinths of their style, and "the reason of their unreasonableness," turned the fine intellects of the Knight of La Mancha. In a word (and not to speak it profanely), the Arcadia is a riddle, a rebus, an acrostic in folio: it contains about 4,000 far-fetched similes, and 6,000 impracticable dilemmas; about 10,000 reasons for doing nothing at all, and as many more against it; numberless alliterations, puns, questions and commands, and other figures of rhetoric; about a score good passages that one may turn to with pleasure, and the most involved, irksome, improgressive, and heteroclite subject that ever was chosen to exercise the pen or patience of man. It no longer adorns the toilette or lies upon the pillow of Maids of Honour and Peeresses in their own right (the Pamelas and Philocleas of a later age), but remains upon the shelves of the libraries of the curious in long works and great names, a monument to show that the author was one of the ablest men and worst writers of the age of Elizabeth.

His Sonnets, inlaid in the Arcadia, are jejune, far-fetched and

frigid. I shall select only one that has been much commended. It is 'To the Highway, where his Mistress had passed,' a strange subject, but not unlikely to be suited to the author's genius.

> 'Highway, since you my chief Parnassus be,
> And that my Muse to you, like line to level,
> Your self for her will take some needful pains,
> More fit for her to make than you to mend;
> Now I find you have a way to know
> To her whose steps may better you, and mend;
> My Muse and I must you of duty greet
> With thanks and wishes, wishing thankfully
> Both you, still fair, and fair by public need,
> By no one man's private use to be foul;
> Nor, as I fear, her steps may leave you muddied;
> Muddied, say you, what clay can dirty you
> Of stones' worst, I wish [illegible]
> Hurting not you, [illegible]

The answer of the Highway has not been preserved, but the sincerity of this appeal must no doubt have moved the stocks and stones to rise and sympathize. His 'Defence of Poesy' is his most readable performance; there he is quite at home, in a sort of special pleader's office, where his ingenuity, scholastic subtlety, and tenaciousness in argument stand him in good stead; and he brings off poetry with flying colours; for he was a man of wit, of sense, and learning, though not a poet of true taste or unsophisticated genius.

LECTURE VII.

Character of Lord Bacon's Works—compared as to style with Sir Thomas Brown and Jeremy Taylor.

Lord Bacon has been called (and justly) one of the wisest of mankind. The word *wisdom* characterizes him more than any other. It was not that he did so much himself to advance the knowledge of man or nature, as that he saw what others had done to advance it, and what was still wanting to its full accomplishment. He stood upon the high 'vantage ground of genius and learning; and traced, "as in a map the voyager his course," the long devious march of human intellect, its elevations and depressions, its windings and its errors. He had a "large discourse of reason, looking before and after." He had made an exact and extensive survey of human acquirements: he took the gauge and metre, the depths and soundings of human capacity. He was master of the comparative anatomy of the mind of man, of the balance of power among the different faculties. He had thoroughly investigated and carefully registered the steps and processes of his own thoughts, with their irregularities and failures, their liabilities to wrong conclusions, either from the difficulties of the subject, or from moral causes, from prejudice, indolence, vanity, from conscious strength or weakness; and he applied this self-knowledge on a mighty scale to the general advances or retrograde movements of the aggregate intellect of the world. He knew well what the goal and crown of moral and intellectual power was, how far men had fallen short of it, and how they came to miss it. He had an instantaneous perception of the quantity of truth or good in any given system; and of the analogy of any given result or principle to others of the same kind scattered through nature or history. His observations take in a larger range, have more profundity from the fineness

of his tact, and more comprehension from the extent of his knowledge, along the line of which his imagination ran with equal celerity and certainty, than any other person's whose writings I know. He however seized upon these results, rather by intuition than by inference: he knew them in their mixed modes and combined effects, rather than by abstraction or analysis, as he explains them to others, not by resolving them into their component parts and elementary principles, so much as by illustrations drawn from other things operating in like manner, and producing similar results; or, as he himself has finely expressed it, "by the same footsteps of nature treading or printing upon several subjects or matters." He had great sagacity of observation, solidity of judgment and scope of fancy; in this resembling Plato and Burke, that he was a popular philosopher and a philosophical declaimer. His writings have the gravity of prose with the fervour and vividness of poetry. His sayings have the effect of axioms, and are at once striking and self-evident. He views objects from the greatest height, and his reflections acquire a sublimity in proportion to their profundity, as in deep wells of water we see the sparkling of the highest fixed stars. The chain of thought reaches to the centre, and ascends the brightest heaven of invention. Reason in his hands becomes an [illegible]

discoveries, he becomes quaint and fantastic, instead of original. His strength was in reflection, not in production; he was the surveyor, not the builder of the fabric of science. He had not strictly the constructive faculty. He was the principal pioneer in the march of modern philosophy, and has completed the education and discipline of the mind for the acquisition of truth, by explaining all the impediments or furtherances that can be applied to it or cleared out of its way. In a word, he was one of the greatest men this country has to boast, and his name deserves to stand, where it is generally placed, by the side of those of our greatest writers, whether we consider the variety, the strength, or the splendour of his faculties, for ornament or use.

His 'Advancement of Learning' is his greatest work; and next to that I like the 'Essays;' for the 'Novum Organum' is more laboured and less effectual than it might be. I shall give a few instances from the first of these chiefly, to explain the scope of the above remarks.

'The Advancement of Learning' is dedicated to James I., and he there observes, with a mixture of truth and flattery, which looks very much like a bold irony—

"I am well assured that this which I shall say is no amplification at all, but a positive and measured truth: which is, that there hath not been, since Christ's time, any king or temporal monarch which hath been so learned in all literature and erudition, divine and human (as your majesty). For let a man seriously and diligently revolve and peruse the succession of the Emperors of Rome, of which Cæsar the Dictator, who lived some years before Christ, and Marcus Antoninus, were the best-learned; and so descend to the Emperors of Grecia, or of the West, and then to the lines of France, Spain, England, Scotland, and the rest, and he shall find this judgment is truly made. For it seemeth much in a king, if by the compendious extractions of other men's wits and labour, he can take hold of any superficial ornaments and shows of learning, or if he countenance and prefer learning and learned men: but to drink indeed of the true fountain of learning, nay, to have such a fountain of learning in himself, in a king, and in a king born, is almost a miracle."

To any one less wrapped up in self-sufficiency than James, the rule would have been more staggering than the exception could have been gratifying. But Bacon was a sort of prose-laureate to the reigning prince, and his loyalty had never been suspected

phical sketch that was ever drawn. After observing that there are "two marks and badges of suspected and falsified science; the one, the novelty and strangeness of terms, the other the strictness of positions, which of necessity doth induce oppositions, and so questions and altercations"—he proceeds—"Surely like as many substances in nature which are solid, do putrefy and corrupt into worms; so it is the property of good and sound knowledge to putrefy and dissolve into a number of subtle, idle, unwholesome, and (as I may term them) *vermiculate* questions; which have, indeed, a kind of quickness and life of spirit, but no soundness of matter or goodness of quality. This kind of degenerate learning did chiefly reign amongst the school-men, who, having sharp and strong wits, and abundance of leisure, and small variety of reading; but their wits being shut up in the cells of a few authors (chiefly Aristotle their dictator) as their persons were shut up in the cells of monasteries and colleges, and knowing little history, either of nature or time, did out of no great quantity of matter, and infinite agitation of wit, spin out unto us those laborious webs of learning which are extant in their books. For the wit and mind of man, if it work upon matter, which is the contemplation of the creatures of God, worketh according to the stuff, and is limited thereby; but if it work upon itself, as the spider worketh his web, then it is endless, and brings forth indeed cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit."

And a little further on, he adds—"Notwithstanding, certain it is, that if those school-men, to their great thirst of truth and unwearied travel of wit, had joined variety and universality of reading and contemplation, they had proved excellent lights to the great advancement of all learning and knowledge; but, as they are, they are great undertakers indeed, and fierce with dark keeping. But, as in the inquiry of the divine truth, their pride inclined to leave the oracle of God's word, and to varnish in the mixture of their own inventions; so in the inquisition of nature, they ever left the oracle of God's works, and adored the deceiving and deformed images which the unequal mirror of their own minds, or a few received authors or principles did represent unto them."

One of his acutest (I might have said profoundest) remarks relates to the near connection between deceiving and being deceived. Volumes might be written in explanation of it. "This vice," he says, "branches itself into two sorts; delight in deceiving, an aptness to be deceived, imposture and credulity; which, although they appear to be of a diverse nature, the one seeming to proceed of cunning, and the other of simplicity, yet certainly they do for the most part concur. For, as the verse noteth, *Percontatorem fugito, nam garrulus idem est*; an inquisitive man is a prattler; so upon the like reason, a credulous man is a deceiver; as we see it in fame, that he that will easily believe rumours will as easily augment rumours, and add somewhat to them of his own, which Tacitus wisely noteth, when he saith, *Fingunt simul credunt que*, so great an affinity hath falsehood and superstition."

I proceed to his account of the causes of error, and specifications for the better advancement of the understanding, which are admirable both for their speculative ingenuity and practical use:

[illegible]

Asia, which at first was prejudged as a vast and impossible enterprise, and yet afterwards it pleaseth Livy to make no more of it than this, *nil aliud quam bene ausus vana contemnere.* And the same happened to Columbus in his western navigation. But in intellectual matters it is much more common; as may be seen in most of the propositions in Euclid, which till they be demonstrate, they seem strange to our assent, but being demonstrate, our mind accepteth of them by a kind of relation (as the lawyers speak,) as if we had known them before.

"Another is an impatience of doubt and haste to assertion without due and mature suspension of judgment. For the two ways of contemplation are not unlike the two ways of action, commonly spoken of by the ancients. The one plain and smooth in the beginning, and in the end impassable; the other rough and troublesome in the entrance, but, after a while, fair and even; so it is in contemplation, if a man will begin with certainties, he shall end in doubts; but if he will be content to begin with doubts, he shall end in certainties.

"Another error is in the manner of the tradition or delivery of knowledge, which is for the most part magistral and peremptory, and not ingenuous and faithful; in a sort, as may be soonest believed, and not easiliest examined. It is true, that in compendious treatises for practice, that form is not to be disallowed. But in the true handling of knowledge, men ought not to fall either on the one side into the vein of Velleius the Epicurean: *nil tam metuens quam ne dubitare aliqua de re videretur;* nor, on the other side, into Socrates his ironical doubting of all things, but to propound things sincerely, with more or less asseveration; as they stand in a man's own judgment, proved more or less."

Lord Bacon in this part declares, "that it is not his purpose to enter into a laudative of learning or to make a hymn to the Muses," yet he has gone near to do this in the following observations on the dignity of knowledge. He says, after speaking of rulers and conquerors:—

"But the commandment of knowledge is yet higher than the commandment over the will: for it is a commandment over the reason, belief, and understanding of man, which is the highest part of the mind, and giveth law to the will itself. For there is no power on earth which setteth a throne or chair of estate in the spirits and souls of men, and in their cogitations, imaginations, opinions, and beliefs, but knowledge and learning. And therefore we see the detestable and extreme pleasure that arch-heretics and false prophets and impostors are transported with, when they once find in themselves that they have a superiority in the faith and conscience of men; so great, as if they have once tasted of it, it is seldom seen that any torture or persecution can make them relinquish or abandon it. But as this is that which the author of the Revelations calls the depth or profoundness of Satan; so by argument of contraries, the just and lawful sovereignty over men's understanding, by force of

conjecture, that he may repose on the certainty of doubt; and he removes an object to the greatest distance from him, that he may take a high and abstracted interest in it, consider it in its relation to the sum of things, not to himself, and bewilder his understanding in the universality of its nature, and the inscrutableness of its origin. His is the sublime of indifference; a passion for the abstruse and imaginary. He turns the world round for his amusement, as if it was a globe of paste-board. He looks down on sublunary affairs as if he had taken his station in one of the planets. The Antipodes are next-door neighbours to him, and Doomsday is not far off. With a thought he embraces both the poles; the march of his pen is over the great divisions of geography and chronology. Nothing touches him nearer than humanity. He feels that he is mortal only in the decay of nature, and the dust of long-forgotten tombs. The finite is lost in the infinite. The orbits of the heavenly bodies or the history of empires are to him but a point in time or a speck in the universe. The great Platonic year revolves in one of his periods. Nature is too little for the grasp of his style. He scoops an antithesis out of fabulous antiquity, and rakes up an epithet from the sweepings of Chaos. It is as if his books had dropt from the clouds, or as if Friar Bacon's head could speak. He stands on the edge of the world of sense and reason, and gains a vertigo by looking down on impossibilities and chimeras. Or he busies himself with the mysteries of the Cabala, or the enclosed secrets of the heavenly quincunxes, as children are amused with tales of the nursery. The passion of curiosity (the only passion of childhood) had in him survived to old age, and had superannuated his other faculties. He moralizes and grows pathetic on a mere idle fancy of his own, as if thought and being were the same, or as if "all this world were one glorious lie." For a thing to have ever had a name is sufficient warrant to entitle it to respectful belief, and to invest it with all the rights of a subject and its predicates. He is superstitious, but not bigoted; to him all religions are much the same, and he says that he should not like to have lived in the time of Christ and the Apostles, as it would have rendered his faith too gross and palpable. His gossiping egotism and personal char

some ancient Druids with the same ceremony and devotion as if they had contained the hallowed relics of his dearest friends; and certainly we feel (as it has been said) the freshness of the mould, and the breath of mortality, in the spirit and force of his style. The conclusion of this singular and unparallelled performance is as follows:

"What song the Syrens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, though puzzling questions, are not beyond all conjecture. What time the persons of these Ossuaries entered the famous nations of the dead, and slept with princes and counsellors, might admit a wide solution. But who were the proprietors of these bones, or what bodies these ashes made up, were a question above antiquarianism: not to be resolved by man, nor easily perhaps by spirits, except we consult the provincial guardians, or tutelary observators. Had they made as good provision for their names, as they have done for their reliques, they had not so grossly erred in the art of perpetuation. But to subsist in bones, and be but pyramidally extant, is a fallacy in duration. Vain ashes, which in the oblivion of names, persons, times, and sexes, have found unto themselves a fruitless continuation, and only arise unto late posterity, as emblems of mortal vanities; antidotes against pride, vain-glory, and madding vices. Pagan vain-glories, which thought the world might last for ever, had encouragement for ambition, and finding no Atropos unto the immortality of their names, were never dampt with the necessity of oblivion. Even old ambitions had the advantage of ours, in the attempts of their vain-glories, who, acting early, and before the probable meridian of time, have, by this time, found great accomplishment of their designs, whereby the ancient heroes have already outlasted their monuments and mechanical preservations. But in this latter scene of time we cannot expect such mummies unto our memories, when ambition may fear the prophecy of Elias, and Charles the Fifth can never hope to live within two Methuselahs of Hector.

"And therefore restless inquietude for the diuturnity of our memories unto present considerations, seems a vanity almost out of date, and superannuated piece of folly. We cannot hope to live so long in our names as some have done in their persons: one face of Janus holds no proportion unto the other. 'Tis too late to be ambitious. The great mutations of the world are acted, or time may be too short for our designs. To extend our memories by monuments, whose death we daily pray for, and whose duration we cannot hope, without injury to our expectations in the advent of the last day, were a contradiction to our beliefs. We, whose generations are ordained in this setting part of time, are providentially taken off from such imaginations. And being necessitated to eye the remaining particle of futurity, are naturally constituted unto thoughts of the next world, and cannot excusably decline the consideration of that duration which maketh pyramids pillars of snow, and all that's past a moment

Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. Afflictions induce callosities which are slippery, or fall like snow upon us, which, notwithstanding, is no unhappy stupidity. To be ignorant of evils to come, and forgetful of evils past, is a merciful provision in nature, whereby we digest the mixture of our few and evil days, and our delivered senses not relapsing into cutting remembrances, our sorrows are not kept raw by the edge of repetitions. A great part of antiquity contented their hopes of subsistency with a transmigration of their souls. A good way to continue their memories, while having the advantage of plural successions, they could not but act something remarkable in such a variety of beings, and enjoying the fame of their passed selves, make accumulation of glory unto their last durations. Others, rather than be lost in the uncomfortable night of nothing, were content to recede into the common being, and make one particle of the public soul of all things, which was no more than to return into their unknown and divine original again. Egyptian ingenuity was more unsatisfied, conserving their bodies in sweet consistences, to attend the return of their souls. But all was vanity, feeding the wind, and folly. The Egyptian mummies, which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandize, Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams.

"In vain do individuals hope for immortality, or any patent from oblivion, in preservations below the moon: men have been deceived even in their flatteries above the sun, and studied conceits to perpetuate their names in heaven. The various cosmography of that part hath already varied the names of contrived constellations: Nimrod is lost in Orion, and Osiris in the Dog-star. While we look for incorruption in the heavens, we find they are but like the earth; durable in their main bodies, alterable in their parts; whereof beside comets and new stars, perspectives begin to tell tales. And the spots that wander about the sun, with Phaeton's favour, would make clear conviction.

"There is nothing immortal but immortality; whatever hath no beginning may be confident of no end. All others have a dependent being, and within the reach of destruction, which is the peculiar of that necessary essence that cannot destroy itself; and the highest strain of omnipotency to be so powerfully constituted as not to suffer even from the power of itself. But the sufficiency of Christian immortality frustrates all earthly glory, and the quality of either state after death makes a folly of posthumous memory. God, who can only destroy our souls, and hath assured our resurrection, either of our bodies or names, hath directly promised no duration. Wherein there is so much of cruelty, that the boldest expectants have found unhappy frustration; and to hope long subsistence, seems but a scape in oblivion. But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing Nativities and Deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery, in the infamy of his nature.

"Life is a pure flame, and we live by an invisible sun within us. A small fire sufficeth for life, great flames seemed too little after death, while men vainly affected precious pyres, and to burn like Sardanapalus; but the wisdom

in the ecstacy of being ever, and as content with six foot as the moles of Adrianus."

I subjoin the following account of this extraordinary writer's style, said to be written in a blank leaf of his works by Mr. Coleridge:

"Sir Thomas Brown is among my first favourites. Rich in various knowledge, exuberant in conceptions and conceits; contemplative, imaginative, often truly great and magnificent in his style and diction, though, doubtless, too often big, stiff, and *hyperlatinistic:* thus I might, without admixture of falsehood, describe Sir T. Brown; and my description would have this fault only, that it would be equally, or almost equally, applicable to half a dozen other writers, from the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth to the end of the reign of Charles the Second. He is indeed all this; and what he has more than all this, and peculiar to himself, I seem to convey to my own mind in some measure, by saying that he is a quiet and sublime *enthusiast*, with a strong tinge of the *fantast;* the humourist constantly mingling with, and flashing across the philosopher, as the darting colours in shot-silk play upon the main dye. In short, he has brains in his head, which is all the more interesting for a little twist in the brains. He sometimes reminds the reader of Montaigne; but from no other than the general circumstance of an egotism common to both, which, in Montaigne, is too often a mere amusing gossip, a chit-chat story of whims and peculiarities that lead to nothing; but which, in Sir Thomas Brown, is always the result of a feeling heart, conjoined with a mind of active curiosity, the natural and becoming egotism of a man, who, loving other men as himself, gains the habit and the privilege of talking about himself as familiarly as about other men. Fond of the curious, and a hunter of oddities and strangenesses, while he conceives himself with quaint and humorous gravity, an useful inquirer into physical truths and fundamental science, he loved to contemplate and discuss his own thoughts and feelings, because he found by comparison with other men's, that *they*, too, were curiosities; and so, with a perfectly graceful, interesting ease, he put *them*, too, into his museum and cabinet of rarities. In very truth, he was not mistaken, so completely does he see every thing

we did not, we should be *acting* the part of our antipodes! And then, 'THE HUNTSMEN ARE UP IN ARABIA,'—what life, what fancy! Does the whimsical knight give us thus the *essence* of gunpowder tea, and call it an *opiate?**

Jeremy Taylor was a writer as different from Sir Thomas Brown as it was possible for one writer to be from another. He was a dignitary of the church, and except in matters of casuistry and controverted points, could not be supposed to enter upon speculative doubts, or give a loose to a sort of dogmatical scepticism. He had less thought, less "stuff of the conscience," less "to give us pause," in his impetuous oratory, but he had equal fancy—not the same vastness and profundity, but more richness and beauty, more warmth and tenderness. He is as rapid, as flowing, and endless, as the other is stately, abrupt, and concentrated. The eloquence of the one is like a river, that of the other is more like an aqueduct. The one is as sanguine, as the other is saturnine in the temper of his mind. Jeremy Taylor took obvious and admitted truths for granted, and illustrated them with an inexhaustible display of new and enchanting imagery. Sir Thomas Brown talks in sum-totals: Jeremy Taylor enumerates all the particulars of a subject. He gives every aspect it will bear, and never "cloys with sameness." His characteristic is enthusiastic and delightful amplification. Sir Thomas Brown

* Sir Thomas Brown has it, "The huntsmen are up in America," but Mr. Coleridge prefers reading Arabia. I do not think his account of the Urn-Burial very happy. Sir Thomas can be said to be "wholly in his subject," only because he is *wholly out of it*. There is not a word in the 'Hydriotaphia' about "a thigh-bone, or a skull, or a bit of mouldered coffin, or a tombstone, or a ghost, or a winding-sheet, or an echo," nor is "a silver nail or a gilt *anno domini* the gayest thing you shall meet with." You do not meet with them at all in the text; nor is it possible, either from the nature of the subject, or of Sir T. Brown's mind, that you should! He chose the subject of Urn-Burial, because it was "one of no mark or likelihood," totally free from the romantic prettiness and pleasing poetical common-places with which Mr. Coleridge has adorned it, and because, being "without form and void," it gave unlimited scope to his high-raised and shadowy imagination. The motto of this author's compositions might be—"*De apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio.* He created his own materials: or to speak of him in his own language, "he saw a dance in the elements of its chaos, and discerned his favourite notions in the great obscurity of nothing!"

gives the beginning and end of things, that you may judge of their place and magnitude: Jeremy Taylor describes their qualities and texture, and enters into all the items of the debtor and creditor account between life and death, grace and nature, faith and good works. He puts his heart into his fancy. He does not pretend to annihilate the passions and pursuits of mankind in the pride of philosophic indifference, but treats them as serious and momentous things, warring with conscience and the soul's health, or furnishing the means of grace and hopes of glory. In his writings, the frail stalk of human life reclines on the bosom of eternity. His 'Holy Living and Dying' is a divine pastoral. He writes to the faithful followers of Christ, as the shepherd pipes to his flock. He introduces touching and heartfelt appeals to familiar life; condescends to men of low estate; and his pious page blushes with modesty and beauty. His style is prismatic. It unfolds the colours of the rainbow; it floats like the bubble through the air; it is like innumerable dew-drops that glitter on the face of morning, and tremble as they glitter. He does not dig his way underground, but slides upon ice, borne on the winged car of fancy. The dancing light he throws upon objects is like an Aurora Borealis, playing betwixt heaven and earth—

> Where pure Niemi's faery banks arise,
> And fringed with roses Tenglio rolls his stream.

He [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] parts. In a word, his writings are more like fine poetry than any other prose whatever; they are a choral song in praise of virtue, and a hymn to the Spirit of the Universe. I shall give a few passages, to show how feeble and inefficient this praise is.

The 'Holy Dying' begins in this manner:—

"M[illegible] [illegible]

Others ride longer in the storm. it may be until seven years of vanity be expired, and then peradventure the sun shines hot upon their heads, and they fall into the shades below, into the cover of death and darkness of the grave to hide them. But if the bubble stands the shock of a bigger drop, and outlives the chances of a child, of a careless nurse, of drowning in a pail of water, of being overlaid by a sleepy servant, or such little accidents, then the young man dances like a bubble empty and gay, and shines like a dove's neck, or the image of a rainbow, which hath no substance, and whose very imagery and colours are fantastical; and so he dances out the gaiety of his youth, and is all the while in a storm, and endures, only because he is not knocked on the head by a drop of bigger rain, or crushed by the pressure of a load of indigested meat, or quenched by the disorder of an ill-placed humour; and to preserve a man alive in the midst of so many chances and hostilities, is as great a miracle as to create him; to preserve him from rushing into nothing, and at first to draw him up from nothing, were equally the issues of an Almighty power."

Another instance of the same rich continuity of feeling, and transparent brilliancy in working out an idea, is to be found in his description of the dawn and progress of reason:

"Some are called *at age* at fourteen, some at one-and-twenty, some never; but all men late enough; for the life of a man comes upon him slowly and insensibly. But as when the sun approaches towards the gates of the morning, he first opens a little eye of heaven, and sends away the spirits of darkness, and gives light to a cock, and calls up the lark to matins, and by-and-by gilds the fringes of a cloud, and peeps over the eastern hills, thrusting out his golden horns, like those which decked the brows of Moses, when he was forced to wear a veil, because himself had seen the face of God; and still, while a man tells the story, the sun gets up higher, till he shows a fair face and a full light, and then he shines one whole day, under a cloud often, and sometimes weeping great and little showers, and sets quickly; so is a man's reason and his life."

This passage puts one in mind of the rising dawn and kindling skies in one of Claude's landscapes. Sir Thomas Brown has nothing of this rich finishing and exact gradation. The genius of the two men differed, as that of the painter from the mathematician. The one measures objects, the other copies them. The one shows that things are nothing out of themselves, or in relation to the whole: the one, what they are in themselves and in relation to us. Or the one may be said to apply the telescope of the mind to distant bodies; the other looks at nature in its infinite minuteness and glossy splendour through a solar microscope.

In speaking of Death, our author's style assumes the port and

withering smile of the King of Terrors. The following are scattered passages on this subject.

our accounts easier, and our pains for our crimes shall be less.* To my apprehension, it is a sad record which is left by Athenæus concerning Ninus the great Assyrian monarch, whose life and death is summed up in these words: 'Ninus the Assyrian had an ocean of gold, and other riches more than the sand in the Caspian sea; he never saw the stars, and perhaps he never desired it; he never stirred up the holy fire among the Magi: nor touched his god with the sacred rod according to the laws: he never offered sacrifice, nor worshipped the deity, nor administered justice, nor spake to the people; nor numbered them: but he was most valiant to eat and drink, and having mingled his wines, he threw the rest upon the stones. This man is dead, behold his sepulchre, and now hear where Ninus is. Sometime I was Ninus, and drew the breath of a living man, but now am nothing but clay. I have nothing but what I did eat, and what I served to myself in lust is all my portion: the wealth with which I was blessed, my enemies meeting together shall carry away, as the mad Thyades carry a raw goat. I am gone to hell: and when I went thither, I neither carried gold, nor horse, nor silver chariot. I that wore a mitre, am now a little heap of dust.'"

He who wrote in this manner also wore a mitre, and is now a heap of dust: but when the name of Jeremy Taylor is no longer remembered with reverence, genius will have become a mockery, and virtue an empty shade!

* The above passage is an inimitably fine paraphrase of some lines on the tombs in Westminster Abbey by F. Beaumont. It shows how near Jeremy Taylor's style was to poetry, and how well it weaves in with it.

"Mortality, behold, and fear,
What a charge of flesh is here!
Think how many royal bones
Sleep within this heap of stones:
Here they lie, had realms and lands,
Who now want strength to stir their hands.
Where from their pulpits, sealed in dust,
They preach 'In greatness is no trust.'
Here's an acre sown indeed
With the richest, royal'st seed
That the earth did e'er suck in,
Since the first man died for sin.
Here the bones of birth have cried,
Though gods they were, as men they died.
Here are sands, ignoble things,
Dropped from the ruined sides of kings.
Here's a world of pomp and state
Buried in dust, once dead by fate."

LECTURE VIII.

On the Spirit of Ancient and Modern Literature—On the German Drama, contrasted with that of the Age of Elizabeth.

Before I proceed to the more immediate subject of the present Lecture, I wish to say a few words of one or two writers in our own time, who have imbibed the spirit and imitated the language of our elder dramatists. Among these I may reckon the ingenious author of 'The Apostate' and 'Evadne,' who [illegible] 'The Traitor,' [illegible] Shirley [illegible] an old play. Shirley himself lived in the time of Charles I. and [illegible] the beginning of Charles II.; but he had formed his style on that of the preceding age, and had written the greatest [illegible] of his plays [illegible] Decker, and Massinger. [illegible] 'The Traitor' [illegible] Shirley [illegible] 'The Cardinal' [illegible] Beaumont and Fletcher [illegible] Mr. [illegible]

[illegible]

glare and bustle of resort; but "there where we have treasured up our hearts," in silence and in solitude, it may claim and find a place for itself. It might be read with advantage in the still retreats of Sherwood Forest, where it would throw a new-born light on the green, sunny glades; the tenderest flower might seem to drink of the poet's spirit, and "the tall deer that paints a dancing shadow of his horns in the swift brook," might seem to do so in mockery of the poet's thought. Mr. Lamb, with a modesty often attendant on fine feeling, has loitered too long in the humbler avenues leading to the temple of ancient genius, instead of marching boldly up to the sanctuary, as many with half his pretensions would have done: "but fools rush in, where angels fear to tread." The defective or objectionable parts of this production are imitations of the defects of the old writers: its beauties are his own, though in their manner. The touches of thought and passion are often as pure and delicate as they are profound; and the character of his heroine Margaret is perhaps the finest and most genuine female character out of Shakspeare. This tragedy was not critic-proof: it had its cracks and flaws and breaches, through which the enemy marched in triumphant. The station which he had chosen was not indeed a walled town, but a straggling village, which the experienced engineers proceeded to lay waste; and he is pinned down in more than one Review of the day, as an exemplary warning to indiscreet writers, who venture beyond the pale of periodical taste and conventional criticism. Mr. Lamb was thus hindered by the taste of the polite vulgar from writing as he wished; his own taste would not allow him to write like them: and he (perhaps wisely) turned critic and prose-writer in his own defence. To say that he has written better about Shakspeare, and about Hogarth, than anybody else, is saying little in his praise. A gentleman of the name of Cornwall, who has lately published a volume of Dramatic Scenes, has met with a very different reception, but I cannot say that he has *deserved* it. He has made no sacrifice at the shrine of fashionable affectation or false glitter. There is nothing common-place in his style to soothe the complacency of dulness, nothing extravagant to startle the grossness of ignorance. He writes with simplicity, delicacy, and fervour;

fourth and last is the German or paradoxical style, which differs from the others in representing men as acting not from the impulse of feeling, or as debating common-place questions of morality, but as the organs and mouth-pieces (that is, as acting, speaking, and thinking under the sole influence) of certain extravagant speculative opinions, abstracted from all existing customs, prejudices, and institutions. It is my present business to speak chiefly of the first and last of these.

Sophocles differs from Shakspeare as a Doric portico does from Westminster Abbey. The principle of the one is simplicity and harmony, of the other richness and power. The one relies on form or proportion, the other on quantity, and variety, and prominence of parts. The one owes its charm to a certain union and regularity of feeling, the other adds to its effect from complexity and the combination of the greatest extremes. The classical appeals to sense and habit; the Gothic or romantic strikes from novelty, strangeness, and contrast. Both are founded in essential and indestructible principles of human nature. We may prefer the one to the other, as we choose, but to set up an arbitrary and bigotted standard of excellence in consequence of this preference, and to exclude either one or the other from poetry or art, is to deny the existence of the first principles of the human mind, and to war with nature, which is the height of weakness and arrogance at once. There are some observations on this subject in a late number of the 'Edinburgh Review,' from which I shall here make a pretty long extract:

"The most obvious distinction between the two styles, the classical and the romantic, is, that the one is conversant with objects that are grand or beautiful in themselves, or in consequence of obvious and universal associations; the other, with those that are interesting only by the force of circumstances and imagination. A Grecian temple, for instance, is a classical object: it is beautiful in itself, and excites immediate admiration. But the ruins of a Gothic castle have no beauty or symmetry to attract the eye; and yet they excite a more powerful and romantic interest, from the ideas with which they are habitually associated. If, in addition to this, we are told that this is Macbeth's castle, the scene of the murder of Duncan, the interest will be

instantly heightened to a sort of pleasing horror. The classical idea or image of any thing, it may also be observed, remains always the same, and suggests nearly the same impressions; but the associations of ideas belonging to the romantic character may vary infinitely, and take in the whole range of nature and accident. Antigone, in Sophocles, waiting near the grove of the Furies—Electra, in Æschylus, offering sacrifice at the tomb of Agamemnon—are classical subjects, because the circumstances and the characters have a correspondent dignity, and an immediate interest, from their mere designation. Florimel, in Spenser, where she is described sitting on the ground in the Witch's hut, is not classical, though in the highest degree poetical and romantic: for the incidents and situation are in themselves mean and disagreeable, till they are redeemed by the genius of the poet, and converted, by the very contrast, into a source of the utmost pathos and elegance. Othello's handkerchief is not classical, though "there was magic in the web:" it is only a powerful instrument of passion and imagination. Even Lear is not classical; for he is a poor crazy old man, who has nothing sublime about him but his afflictions, and who dies of a broken heart.

Schlegel somewhere compares the Furies of Æschylus to [illegible]

culties by what they say or do;—the others are intolerable, even to sight.

"Our author is right in affirming, that the true way to understand the plays of Sophocles and Æschylus, is to study them before the groupes of the Niobe or the Laocoon. If we can succeed in explaining this analogy, we shall have solved nearly the whole difficulty. For it is certain, that there are exactly the same powers of mind displayed in the poetry of the Greeks as in their statues. Their poetry is exactly what their sculptors might have written. Both are exquisite imitations of nature; the one in marble, the other in words. It is evident that the Greek poets had the same perfect idea of the subjects they described as the Greek sculptors had of the objects they represented; and they give as much of this absolute truth of imitation as can be given by words. But in this direct and simple imitation of nature, as in describing the form of a beautiful woman, the poet is greatly inferior to the sculptor; it is in the power of illustration, in comparing it to other things, and suggesting other ideas of beauty or love, that he has an entirely new source of imagination opened to him: and of this power the moderns have made at least a bolder and more frequent use than the ancients. The description of Helen in Homer is a description of what might have happened and been seen, as 'that she moved with grace, and that the old men rose up with reverence as she passed;' the description of Belphœbe in Spenser is a description of what was only visible to the eye of the poet:

> "Upon her eyelids many graces sat,
> Under the shadow of her even brows."

The description of the soldiers going to battle in Shakspeare, 'all plumed like ostriches, like eagles newly baited, wanton as goats, wild as young bulls,' is too bold, figurative, and profuse of dazzling images, for the mild, equable tone of classical poetry, which never loses sight of the object in the illustration. The ideas of the ancients were too exact and definite, too much attached to the material form or vehicle by which they were conveyed, to admit of those rapid combinations, those unrestrained flights of fancy, which, glancing from heaven to earth, unite the most opposite

with wings. The first has the advantage in point of form; the last in colour and motion.

"Perhaps we may trace this difference to something analogous in physical organization, situation, religion, and manners. First, the physical organization of the Greeks seems to have been more perfect, more susceptible of external impressions, and more in harmony with external nature than ours, who have not the same advantages of climate and constitution. Born of a beautiful and vigorous race, with quick senses and a clear understanding, and placed under a mild heaven, they gave the fullest development to their external faculties: and where all is perceived easily, every thing is perceived in harmony and proportion. It is the stern genius of the North which drives men back upon their own resources, which makes them slow to perceive, and averse to feel, and which, by rendering them insensible to the single, successive impressions of things, requires their collective and combined force to rouse the imagination violently and unequally. It should be remarked, however, that the early poetry of some of the Eastern nations has even more of that irregularity, wild enthusiasm, and disproportioned grandeur, which has been considered as the distinguishing character of the Northern nations.

"Again, a good deal may be attributed to the state of manners and political institutions. The ancient Greeks were warlike tribes encamped in cities. They had no other country than that which was enclosed within the walls of the town in which they lived. Each individual belonged, in the first instance, to the state; and his relations to it were so close as to take away, in a great measure, all personal independence and free-will. Every one was mortised to his place in society, and had his station assigned him as part of the political machine, which could only subsist by strict subordination and regularity. Every man was, as it were, perpetually on duty, and his faculties kept constant watch and ward. Energy of purpose and intensity of observation became the necessary characteristics of such a state of society; and the general principle communicated itself from this ruling concern for the public, to morals, to art, to language, to every thing. The tragic poets of Greece were among her best soldiers; and it is no wonder that they were as severe in their

poetry as in their discipline. Their swords and their styles carved out their way with equal sharpness. Altogether, however, the tragedies of Sophocles, which are the perfection of the classical style, are hardly tragedies in our sense of the word.* They do not exhibit the extremity of human passion and suffering. The object of modern tragedy is to represent the soul utterly subdued as it were, or at least convulsed and overthrown, by passion or misfortune. That of the ancients was to show how the greatest crimes could be perpetrated with the least remorse, and the greatest calamities borne with the most emotion. Firmness of purpose and calmness of sentiment are their leading characteristics. Their heroes and heroines act and suffer as if they were always in the presence of a higher power, or as if human life itself were a religious ceremony performed in honour of the Gods and for the State. The mind is not shown to its centre: the whole being in a condition or lesson of awe. Contradictory motives were not understood: plots, in the sense of imagined, manifold passages not existing, the overcoming the repugnance of the will to crime: the abstract and collateral or outward circumstances not called in to overwhelm the man with the whole weight of unexpected calamity. The true conflict of the feelings, the desperate struggle with fortune, are seldom there. All is conducted with a fatal composure; prepared and submitted to as with infallible certainty, as if Nature were only an instrument in the hands of Fate.

* The state of things was entirely changed under the Roman empire. In the progress of luxury and refinement, when, after a considerable interval, succeeded [illegible], the tender passions of love struggled for dominion in the breast, and the pathetic and was revived. Society was [illegible] and the world was [illegible] Then [illegible] the [illegible] the state of [illegible] was [illegible] and the [illegible] supposed to give birth to all that was constant in attachment, ad

venturous in action, strange, wild, and extravagant in invention. Human life took the shape of a busy, voluptuous dream, where the imagination was now lost amidst 'antres vast and deserts idle;' or suddenly transported to stately palaces, echoing with dance and song. In this uncertainty of events, this fluctuation of hopes and fears, all objects became dim, confused, and vague. Magicians, dwarfs, giants, followed in the train of romance; and Orlando's enchanted sword, the horn which he carried with him, and which he blew thrice at Roncesvalles, and Rogero's winged horse, were not sufficient to protect them in their unheard-of encounters, or deliver them from their inextricable difficulties. It was a return to the period of the early heroic ages; but tempered by the difference of domestic manners, and the spirit of religion. The marked difference in the relation of the sexes arose from the freedom of choice in women: which, from being the slaves of the will and passions of men, converted them into the arbiters of their fate, which introduced the modern system of gallantry, and first made love a feeling of the heart, founded on mutual affection and esteem. The leading virtues of the Christian religion, self-denial and generosity, assisted in producing the same effect. Hence the spirit of chivalry, of romantic love and honour!

"The mythology of the romantic poetry differed from the received religion: both differed essentially from the classical. The religion or mythology of the Greeks was nearly allied to their poetry: it was material and definite. The Pagan system reduced the gods to the human form, and elevated the powers of inanimate nature to the same standard. Statues carved out of the finest marble, represented the objects of their religious worship in airy porticos, in solemn temples and consecrated groves. Mercury was seen 'new lighted on some heaven-kissing hill;' and the Naiad or Dryad came gracefully forth as the personified genius of the stream or wood. All was subjected to the senses. The Christian religion, on the contrary, is essentially spiritual and abstracted: it is 'the evidence of things unseen.' In the Heathen mythology, form is everywhere predominant; in the Christian, we find only unlimited, undefined power. The imagination alone 'broods over the immense abyss, and makes it pregnant.' There is, in the

habitual belief of an universal, invisible principle of all things, a vastness and obscurity which confounds our perceptions, while it exalts our piety. A mysterious awe surrounds the doctrines of the Christian faith: the infinite is everywhere before us, whether we turn to reflect on what is revealed to us of the divine nature or our own.

"History, as well as religion, has contributed to enlarge the bounds of imagination; and both together, by showing past and future objects at an indefinite distance, have accustomed the mind to contemplate and take an interest in the obscure and shadowy. The ancients were more circumscribed within the present tense—spoke only their own language—were conversant only with their own customs—were acquainted only with the events of their own history. [illegible] particular ideas less perfect and distinct. The constant reference to a former state of manners and literature is [illegible] modern poetry. We are always talking of the Greeks and Romans;—they never said anything of us. This circumstance [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

throws nature open to you. It is tragedy in masquerade. We never get beyond conjecture and reasoning—beyond the general impression of the situation of the persons—beyond general reflections on their passions—beyond general descriptions of objects. We never get at that something more, which is what we are in search of, namely, what we ourselves should feel in the same situations. The true poet transports you to the scene—you see and hear what is passing—you catch, from the lips of the persons concerned, what lies nearest to their hearts;—the French poet takes you into his closet, and reads you a lecture upon it. The *chef-d'œuvres* of their stage, then, are, at best, only ingenious paraphrases of nature. The dialogue is a tissue of common-places, of laboured declamations on human life, of learned casuistry on the passions, on virtue and vice, which any one else might make just as well as the person speaking; and yet, what the persons themselves would say, is all we want to know, and all for which the poet puts them into those situations."

After the Restoration, that is, after the return of the exiled family of the Stuarts from France, our writers transplanted this artificial, monotonous, and imposing common-place style into England, by imitations and translations, where it could not be expected to take deep root, and produce wholesome fruits, and where it has indeed given rise to little but turgidity and rant in men of original force of genius, and to insipidity and formality in feebler copyists. Otway is the only writer of this school, who, in the lapse of a century and a half, has produced a tragedy (upon the classic or regular model) of indisputable excellence and lasting interest. The merit of 'Venice Preserved' is not confined to its effect on the stage, or to the opportunity it affords for the display of the powers of the actors in it, of a Jaffier, a Pierre, a Belvidera: it reads as well in the closet, and loses little or none of its power of rivetting breathless attention, and stirring the deepest yearnings of affection. It has passages of great beauty in themselves (detached from the fable) touches of true nature and pathos, though none equal or indeed comparable to what we meet with in Shakspeare and other writers of that day; but the awful suspense of the situations, the conflict of duties and passions, the intimate bonds that unite the charac-

ters together, and that are violently rent asunder like the parting of soul and body, the solemn march of the tragical events to the fatal catastrophe that winds up and closes over all, give to this production of Otway's Muse a charm and power that bind it like a spell on the public mind, and have made it a proud and inseparable adjunct of the English stage. Thomson has given it due honour in his feeling verse, when he exclaims:

> "See on the stage the Ghost of Hamlet stalks,
> Otway to tears, pure Monimia mourns,
> And Belvidera pours her soul in love."

There is a mixture of effeminacy, of luxurious and cowardly indulgence of his wayward sensibility, in Jaffier's character, which is however finely relieved by the bold, intrepid vibrancy and energy of Pierre, while it is exposed by the difference of his situation and circumstances to Bertrand: but in the "Orphan" the pathos is of a more simple and ordinary character, and makes a direct appeal to the heart, without going deeply at the root of that mental torture and [illegible] which alone makes tragedy endurable, that reveals its sublimities, its terrors, or its struggles sublime. Yet there are noble passages in this extreme to be met with in Otway; and how powerfully he could write, when he chose, with expression and [illegible] may be seen from the well-known scene where Castalio [illegible] "Vain man! to think of human faith!" Otway always [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible]. We [illegible] might be quoted as [illegible] tears, which many [illegible] eyes have since fallen from glistening eyes, "that sacred pity had engendered there." [illegible] and warmth of genius; but [illegible] image [illegible] to the time [illegible] and [illegible] others [illegible] with keenness of [illegible] its [illegible] was attempted [illegible] Miss O'Neil playing the part of Monimia. [illegible] not

entirely succeed (as it appeared at the time) from the plot turning all on one circumstance, and that hardly of a nature to be obtruded on the public notice. The incidents and characters are taken almost literally from an old play by Robert Tailor, called 'The Hog hath Lost his Pearl.'

Addison's 'Cato,' in spite of Dennis's criticism, still retains possession of the stage with all its unities. My love and admiration for Addison is as great as any person's, let that other person be who he will; but it is not founded on his 'Cato,' in extolling which Whigs and Tories contended in loud applause. The interest of this play (bating that shadowy regret that always clings to and flickers round the form of free antiquity) is confined to the declamation, which is feeble in itself, and not heard on the stage. I have seen Mr. Kemble in this part repeat the 'Soliloquy on Death' without a line being distinctly heard; nothing was observable but the thoughtful motion of his lips, and the occasional extension of his hand in sign of doubts suggested or resolved; yet this beautiful and expressive dumb-show, with the propriety of his costume, and the elegance of his attitude and figure, excited the most lively interest, and kept attention even more on the stretch, to catch every imperfect syllable or speaking gesture. There is nothing, however, in the play to excite ridicule, or shock by absurdity, except the love scenes, which are passed over as what the spectator has no proper concern with; and however feeble or languid the interest produced by a dramatic exhibition, unless there is some positive stumbling-block thrown in the way, or gross offence given to an audience, it is generally suffered to linger on to a *euthanasia*, instead of dying a violent and premature death. If an author (particularly an author of high reputation) can contrive to preserve a uniform degree of insipidity, he is nearly sure of impunity. It is the mixture of great faults with splendid passages (the more striking from the contrast) that it is inevitable damnation. Every one must have seen the audience tired out and watching for an opportunity to wreak their vengeance on the author, and yet not able to accomplish their wish, because no one part seemed more tiresome or worthless than another. The philosophic mantle of Addison's 'Cato,' when it no longer spreads its graceful folds on

the shoulders of John Kemble, will I fear fall to the ground; nor do I think Mr. Kean likely to pick it up again, with dauntless ambition or stoic pride, like that of Coriolanus. He could not play Cato (at least I think not) for the same reason that he will play Coriolanus. He can always play a living man; he cannot play a lifeless statue.

Dryden's plays have not come down to us, except in the collection of his printed works. The last of them that was on the list of regular acting plays was 'Don Sebastian.' 'The Mask of Arthur and Emmeline' was the other day revived at one of our theatres without much success. 'Alexander the Great' is by Lee, who wrote some things in conjunction with Dryden, and who had far more power and passion, though irregular and turbulent, [illegible] upon constitutional morbidity, and who might have done better things (as we see from his 'Œdipus') had not his genius been perverted and rendered worse than abortive by catching the vicious manner of his age to the greatest excess. Dryden's plays are perhaps the fairest specimen of what this manner was. I do not know how to describe it better than by saying that it is one continued and exaggerated common-place. All the characters are put into a swaggering attitude of dignity, and [illegible] in the pomp of [illegible]. The [illegible] are extravagant, yet not [illegible]; they are [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to reality, and [illegible] [illegible] measured and [illegible] free and flowing rhymes [illegible] of his subject, and could find modulated sounds to express it. Dryden had no dramatic genius [illegible]. In his plays [illegible]. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] I will give two passages [illegible] 'Don Sebastian' [illegible] what I have said [illegible].

Almeyda advising Sebastian to fly from the power of **Muley-Moloch**, addresses him thus:

> "Leave then the luggage of your fate behind;
> To make your flight more easy, leave Almeyda.
> Nor think me left a base, ignoble prey,
> Exposed to this inhuman tyrant's lust.
> My virtue is a guard beyond my strength;
> And death my last defence within my call."

Sebastian answers very gravely:

> "Death may be called in vain, and cannot come:
> Tyrants can tie him up from your relief:
> Nor has a Christian privilege to die.
> Alas, thou art too young in thy new faith:
> Brutus and Cato might discharge their souls,
> And give them furloughs for another world:
> But we, like sentries, are obliged to stand,
> In starless nights, and wait the appointed hour."

Sebastian then urging her to prevent the tyrant's designs by an instant marriage, she says:

> "'Tis late to join, when we must part so soon.
> *Sebastian.* Nay, rather let us haste it, ere we part:
> Our souls, for want of that acquaintance here,
> May wander in the starry walks above,
> And, forced on worse companions, miss ourselves."

In the scene with Muley-Moloch, where she makes intercession for Sebastian's life, she says:

> "My father's, mother's, brother's death I pardon:
> That's somewhat sure, a mighty sum of murder,
> Of innocent and kindred blood struck off.
> My prayers and penance shall discount for these,
> And beg of Heaven to charge the bill on me:
> Behold what price I offer, and how dear
> To buy Sebastian's life.
> *Emperour.* Let after-reckonings trouble fearful fools;
> I'll stand the trial of those trivial crimes:
> But since thou begg'st me to prescribe my terms,
> The only I can offer are thy love;
> And this one day of respite to resolve.

Grant or deny, for thy next word is Fate;
And Fate is deaf to prayer.
  A[illegible] May heaven [illegible]
At thy last breath [illegible]: I curse thee not:
For who can better curse the plague or devil
Than to be what they are? That curse be thine.
Now do not speak, Sebastian, for you need not,
But [illegible], for I resign your [illegible]. Look, heaven,
Almeyda [illegible] dear Sebastian's death!
But is there heaven, for I begin to doubt?
The skies are hush'd; no grumbling thunders roll:
Now take your swing, ye impious; sin, unpunish'd.
Eternal Providence seems over-watch'd,
And with a slumbering nod assents to murder . . .
Farewell, my lost Sebastian!
I do not beg, I challenge justice now:
O Powers, if kings be your peculiar care,
Why [illegible] with your prerogative?
[illegible] to [illegible]:
[illegible] with [illegible];
An[illegible] word
That [illegible] yours.

These passages, with many like them, will be found in the first scene of the third act.

The occasional swearing expressions, such as that of souls at the resurrection [illegible] for their limbs," are the language of strong [illegible] and [illegible] not proper to tragic or serious poetry.

[illegible] Dryden [illegible] years. [illegible] Mur-phy's [illegible] The Gamester,

'Oroonoko,' and 'Fatal Curiosity,' and who, instead of mounting on classic stilts and making rhetorical flourishes, went out of the established road to seek for truth and nature and effect in the commonest life and lowest situations. In short, the only tragedy of this period is that to which their productions gave a name, and which has been called in contradistinction by the French, and with an express provision for its merits and defects, the '*Tragédie bourgeoise*.' An anecdote is told of the first of these writers by Gray, in one of his letters, dated from Horace Walpole's country-seat, about the year 1740, who says, "Old Mr. Southern is here, who is now above 80; a very agreeable old man, at least I think so when I look in his face, and think of Isabella and Oroonoko." It is pleasant to see these traits of attachment and gratitude kept up in successive generations of poets to one another, and also to find that the same works of genius that have "sent us weeping to our beds," and made us "rise sadder and wiser on the morrow morn," have excited just the same fondness of affection in others before we were born; and it is to be hoped will do so after we are dead. Our best feelings, and those on which we pride ourselves most, and with most reason, are perhaps the commonest of all others.

Up to the present reign, and during the best part of it (with another solitary exception, 'Douglas,' which, with all its feebleness and extravagance, has in its style and sentiments a good deal of poetical and romantic beauty,) Tragedy wore the face of the Goddess of Dulness in the 'Dunciad,' serene, torpid, sickly, lethargic and affected, till it was roused from its trance by the blast of the French Revolution, and by the loud trampling of the German Pegasus on the English stage, which now appeared as pawing to get free from its ancient trammels, and rampant shook off the incumbrance of all former examples, opinions, prejudices, and principles. If we have not been alive and well since this period, at least we have been alive, and it is better to be alive than dead. The German tragedy (and our own, which is only a branch of it,) aims at effect, and produces it often in the highest degree: and it does this by going all the lengths not only of instinctive feeling, but of speculative opinion, and startling the hearer by overturning all the established maxims of society, and

setting at nought all the received rules of composition. It cannot be said of this style that in it "decorum is the principal thing." It is the violation of decorum that is its first and last principle, the beginning, middle, and end. It is an insult and defiance to Aristotle's definition of tragedy. The action is not grave, but extravagant: the fable is not probable, but improbable: the favourite characters are not only low, but vicious: the sentiments are such as do not become the person into whose mouth they are put, nor that of any other person: the language is a mixture of metaphysical jargon and flaring prose: the moral is immorality. In spite of all this, a German tragedy is a good thing. It is a fine hallucination: it is a noble madness, and as there is a pleasure in madness which none but madmen know, so there is a pleasure in reading a German play to be found in no other. The world have thought so: they go to see 'The Stranger,' they go to see 'Lovers' Vows,' and 'Pizarro;' they have their eyes wide open all the time, and almost cry them out before they come away, and therefore they go again. There is something in this style that hits the temper of men's minds; that, if it does not hold the mirror up to nature, yet "shows the very age and body of the time its form and pressure." It embodies, it sets off and aggrandises in all the pomp of action, in all the [illegible] of hyperbole, [illegible]

excitement and the zest. We see the natural always pitted against the social man; and the majority, who are not of the privileged classes, take part with the former. The hero is a sort of metaphysical Orson, armed not with teeth and a club, but with hard sayings and unanswerable sentences, ticketed and labelled with extracts and mottos from the modern philosophy. This common representative of mankind is a natural son of some feudal lord, or wealthy baron: and he comes to claim, as a matter of course and of simple equity, the rich reversion of the title and estates to which he has a right by the bounty of nature and the privilege of his birth. This produces a very edifying scene, and the proud, unfeeling, unprincipled baron is hooted from the stage. A young woman, a sempstress, or a waiting-maid of much beauty and accomplishment, who would not think of matching with a fellow of low birth or fortune for the world, falls in love with the heir of an immense estate out of pure regard to his mind and person, and thinks it strange that rank and opulence do not follow as natural appendages in the train of sentiment. A lady of fashion, wit, and beauty, forfeits the sanctity of her marriage-vow, but preserves the inviolability of her sentiments and character,

"Pure in the last recesses of the mind"—

and triumphs over false opinion and prejudice, like gold out of the fire, the brighter for the ordeal. A young man turns robber and captain of a gang of banditti; and the wonder is to see the heroic ardour of his sentiments, his aspirations after the most godlike goodness and unsullied reputation, working their way through the repulsiveness of his situation, and making use of fortune only as a foil to nature. The principle of contrast and contradiction is here made use of, and no other. All qualities are reversed: virtue is always at odds with vice, "which shall be which:" the internal character and external situation, the actions and the sentiments, are never in accord: you are to judge of every thing by contraries: those that exalt themselves are abased, and those that should be humbled are exalted: the high places and strongholds of power and greatness are crumbled in the dust; opinions totter, feelings are brought into ques-

tion, and the world is turned upside down, with all things in it! "There is some soul of goodness in things evil"—and there is some soul of goodness in all this. The world and every thing in it is not just what it ought to be, or what it pretends to be; or such extravagant and prodigious paradoxes would be driven from the stage—would meet with sympathy in no human breast, high or low, young or old. "*There's something rotten in the state of Denmark.*" Opinion is not truth: appearance is not reality: power is not beneficence: rank is not wisdom: nobility is not the only virtue: riches are not happiness: desert and success are different things: actions do not always speak the character any more than words. We feel this, and do justice to the romantic extravagance of the German Muse.

In Germany, where this *outré* style of treating every thing established and adventitious was carried to its height, there were, as we learn from 'The Sorrows of Werter,' seven and twenty ranks in society, each raised above the other, and of which the one above did not speak to the one below it. Is it wonderful that the poets and philosophers of Germany, the discontented Titans of talent, who thought and mourned for themselves and their fellows, the Goethes, the Lessings, the Schillers, the Kotzebues, felt at sudden and unresistible impulse by a convulsive effort to tear asunder this tissue of imagery of society, and to throw off that load of absurd prejudice, of time-worn pride and superannuated folly, that pressed down every energy of their nature and stifled the breath of liberty, of truth and genius, in their bosoms? These Titans of our days tried to throw off the dead weight that encumbered them, and in so doing, warred not against heaven, but against earth. The same writers (as far as I have seen) have made the only intelligible Jacobins, and their school of poetry is the only real school of Radical Reform.

In reasoning, truth and soberness may prevail, on which side soever they incline: but in works of imagination novelty has the advantage over precedent; that which is striking, original, over that which is trite and known before, and that which gives unlimited scope to the indulgence of the passions (whether erroneous or not) over that which imposes a restraint upon them.

I have half trifled with this subject; and I believe I have done so because I despaired of finding language for some old rooted feelings I have about it, which a theory could neither give nor can it take away. 'The Robbers' was the first play I ever read: and the effect it produced upon me was the greatest. It stunned me like a blow, and I have not recovered enough from it to describe how it was. There are impressions which neither time nor circumstances can efface. Were I to live much longer than I have any chance of doing, the books which I read when I was young I can never forget. Five-and-twenty years have elapsed since I first read the translation of 'The Robbers,' but they have not blotted the impression from my mind: it is here still, an old dweller in the chambers of the brain. The scene in particular in which Moor looks through his tears at the evening sun from the mountain' brow, and says in his despair, "It was my wish like him to live, like him to die: it was an idle thought, a boy's conceit," took fast hold of my imagination, and that sun has to me never set! The last interview in 'Don Carlos' between the two lovers, in which the injured bride struggles to burst the prison-house of her destiny, in which her hopes and youth lie coffined, and buried, as it were, alive, under the oppression of unspeakable anguish, I remember gave me a deep sense of suffering and a strong desire after good, which has haunted me ever since. I do not like Schiller's later style so well. His 'Wallenstein,' which is admirably and almost literally translated by Mr. Coleridge, is stately, thoughtful, and imaginative: but where is the enthusiasm, the throbbing of hope and fear, the mortal struggle between the passions; as if all the happiness or misery of a life were crowded into a moment, and the die was to be cast that instant? Kotzebue's best work I read first in Cumberland's imitation of it in 'The Wheel of Fortune;' and I confess that that style of sentiment which seems to make of life itself a long-drawn endless sigh, has something in it that pleases me, in spite of rules and criticism. Goëthe's tragedies are (those that I have seen of them, his 'Count Egmont,' 'Stella,' &c.) constructed upon the second or inverted manner of the German stage, with a deliberate design to avoid all possible effect and interest, and this object is completely accomplished. He is however spoken of with

enthusiasm almost amounting to [illegible] and

but vexation and disappointment in ninety-nine instances out of a hundred; or when he thinks to grasp the luckless prize, finds it not worth the trouble—the perfume of a minute, fleeting as a shadow, hollow as a sound: "as often got without merit as lost without deserving." He thinks that the attainment of acknowledged excellence will secure him the expression of those feelings in others, which the image and hope of it had excited in his own breast, but instead of that he meets with nothing (or scarcely nothing) but squint-eyed suspicion, idiot wonder, and grinning scorn. It seems hardly worth while to have taken all the pains he has been at for this!

In youth we borrow patience from our future years: the spring of hope gives us courage to act and suffer. A cloud is upon our onward path, and we fancy that all is sunshine beyond it. The prospect seems endless, because we do not know the end of it. We think that life is long, because art is so, and that, because we have much to do, it is well worth doing: or that no exertions can be too great, no sacrifices too painful, to overcome the difficulties we have to encounter. Life is a continued struggle to be what we are not, and to do what we cannot. But as we approach the goal, we draw in the reins; the impulse is less, as we have not so far to go; as we see objects nearer, we become less sanguine in the pursuit: it is not the despair of not attaining, so much as knowing that there is nothing worth obtaining, and the fear of having nothing left even to wish for, that damps our ardour and relaxes our efforts; and if the mechanical habit did not increase the facility, would, I believe, take away all inclination or power to do anything. We stagger on the few remaining paces to the end of our journey; make perhaps one final effort; and are glad when our task is done!

CHARACTERS

OF

SHAKSPEARES PLAYS.

TO

CHARLES LAMB, ESQ.,

[illegible]

AS A MARK OF OLD FRIENDSHIP AND ESTEEM,

BY THE AUTHOR.

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ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE THIRD LONDON EDITION.

BY HAZLITT'S SON.

The following work, of which the first edition was sold in a few days, has been long out of print; the present republication has been undertaken to supply the constant and increasing demand which the rising popularity of the author has generated.

Those to whom the masterly criticisms of William Hazlitt are most familiar—we especially allude to the notices of the English poets, the dramatists of Elizabeth's time, the comic writers, the actors of his own day, and the painters of every age—will gladly hail the appearance of the present volume, as a sign and promise of others yet to come; as come they will, in the form of this, and containing matter certainly not less entitled to preservation in an elegant and convenient shape, should the success of the present venture warrant similar experiments.

Those also (a much larger class of the "reading public") to whom the writings of our vigorous and original essayist are but partially known, through the medium of stray volumes, or articles buried and scarcely visible in fresh, startling and animated pages, will welcome with no less eagerness what, if encouraged, may prove the commencement of a rich and attractive series—an edition of the miscellaneous and scattered writings of this

Patriot, Metaphysician, and Critic. This latter class of seekers is rapidly increasing, as copies of the old editions disappear and the name of their author comes brighter and brighter out of the "foul fog" in which contemporary jealousy and political prejudice hoped effectually to hide its lustre. The minds on which, in spite of every disadvantage, he made a deep impression during his lifetime, were the minds of younger men than himself, and these are now reacting on others more youthful than themselves. Many who are promoting the best interests of the world, in wide or narrow circles, in the press or the lecture-room, the literary association or mechanics' institute, owe much of the immediate spring and impulse of the power which is now so happily producing power, to the force and life of Hazlitt's writings. No author in our language exceeds him in the great art of setting his readers thinking. Where his own thoughts, whether from carelessness or caprice, fall short of the point of truth always aimed at, they nevertheless serve as guides and monitors to the understanding and imagination of the reader. This seems especially the case with the work now submitted to the public. These views of the "Characters of Shakspeare's Plays" remind one of Kean's acting in some of the tragedies here criticized. They are incomplete and faulty in some respects—speculative and doubtful in others; but wonderfully full of thought, and always brilliant in expression. Right or wrong, they cannot be read with indifference; for whatever may have been his faults, Hazlitt never wrote a dull sentence.

PREFACE.

It is observed by Mr. Pope, that "If ever any author deserved the name of an *original*, it was Shakspeare. Homer himself drew not his art so immediately from the fountains of nature: it proceeded through Egyptian strainers and channels, and came to him not without some tincture of the soil and climate, or some cast of the models, of those before him. The poetry of Shakspeare was inspiration indeed: he is not so much an imitator, as an instrument of nature; and it is not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks through him.

"His *characters* are so much nature herself, that it is a kind of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her. Those of other poets have a constant resemblance, which shows that they have remembered one another, and are but multiplied copies of the same original; each picture, like a mock rainbow, is but the reflection of a reflection. But every single character in Shakspeare is as much an individual as those in life itself; it is as impossible to find any two alike, and such as, from their relation or affinity in any respect, appear most to be twins, will upon comparison be found remarkably distinct. To this life and variety of character, we must add the wonderful preservation of it; which is such throughout his plays, that, had all the speeches been printed without the very names of

the persons, I believe one might have applied them with certainty to every speaker."

The object of the volume here offered to the public is to illustrate these remarks in a more particular manner by a reference to each play. A gentleman of the name of Mason, the author of a Treatise on Ornamental Gardening (not Mason the poet), began a work of a similar kind about forty years ago, but he only lived to finish a parallel between the characters of Macbeth and Richard III., which is an exceedingly ingenious piece of analytical criticism. Richardson's Essays include but a few of Shakspeare's principal characters. The only work which seemed to supersede the necessity of an attempt like the present was Schlegel's very admirable Lectures on the Drama, which gave by far the best account of the plays of Shakspeare that have hitherto appeared. The only circumstances in which it was thought not impossible to improve on the manner in which the German critic has executed this part of his design were in avoiding an appearance of mysticism in his style, not very attractive to the English reader, and in bringing illustrations from particular passages of the plays themselves, of which Schlegel's work, from the extensiveness of his plan, did not admit. We will at the same time confess, that some little jealousy of the character of the national understanding was not without its share in producing the following undertaking, for "we were piqued" that it should be reserved for a foreign critic to give "reasons for the faith which we English have in Shakspeare." Certainly, no writer among ourselves has shown either the same enthusiastic admiration of his genius, or the same philosophical acuteness in pointing out his characteristic excellences. As we have pretty well ex-

hausted all we had to say upon this subject in the body of the work, we shall here transcribe Schlegel's general account of Shakspeare, which is in the following words:—

"Never, perhaps, was there so comprehensive a talent for the delineation of character as Shakspeare's. It not only grasps the diversities of rank, sex and age, down to the dawnings of infancy; not only do the king and the beggar, the hero and the pickpocket, the sage and the idiot, speak and act with equal truth; not only does he transport himself to distant ages and foreign nations, and portray in the most accurate manner, with only a few apparent exaggerations of costume, the spirit of the ancient Romans, of the Britons and their wars with the English, of the English themselves (a great part of their history, of the Southern Europeans (in the serious parts of many comedies), the cultivated society of that time, and the former rude and barbarous state of the North; his human characters have not only such depth and precision that they cannot be arranged under classes, and are exhaustible even in conception; but this Prometheus not merely forms men, he knows the parts of the inanimate world of spirits: [illegible] he knows the effect; exhibits [illegible] unfathomed mysteries; paints [illegible] with a force of expression [illegible] and [illegible] in the grandest possess such truth and consistency, that even where [illegible] he [illegible] he exhibits the extraordinary [illegible] could be [illegible] they [illegible] In a word, [illegible] the [illegible] and strong [illegible] the [illegible] goals of [illegible] yet [illegible] We are [illegible] the

wonderful, and the unheard-of, in such intimate nearness. If Shakspeare deserves our admiration for his characters, he is equally deserving of it for his exhibition of passion, taking this word in its widest signification, as including every mental condition, every tone, from indifference or familiar mirth to the wildest rage and despair. He gives us the history of minds; he lays open to us, in a single word, a whole series of preceding conditions. His passions do not at first stand displayed to us in all their height, as is the case with so many tragic poets, who, in the language of Lessing, are thorough masters of the legal style of love. He paints in a most inimitable manner, the gradual progress from the first origin. 'He gives,' as Lessing says, 'a living picture of all the most minute and secret artifices by which a feeling steals into our souls; of all the imperceptible advantages which it there gains: of all the stratagems by which every other passion is made subservient to it, till it becomes the sole tyrant of our desires and aversions.' Of all poets, perhaps, he alone has portrayed the mental diseases—melancholy, delirium, lunacy—with such inexpressible, and, in every respect, definite truth, that the physician may enrich his observations from them in the same manner as from real cases.

"And yet Johnson has objected to Shakspeare, that his pathos is not always natural and free from affectation. There are, it is true, passages, though, comparatively speaking, very few, where his poetry exceeds the bounds of true dialogue, where a too soaring imagination, a too luxuriant wit, rendered the complete dramatic forgetfulness of himself impossible. With this exception, the censure originates only in a fanciless way of thinking, to which everything appears unnatural that does not suit its own

tame as pretty. Hence, an idea has been formed of simple and primitive poetry, which consists in exclamations destitute of imagery, and nowise elevated above every-day life. But energetic passions exercise the whole of the mental powers, and when consequently, in highly favored natures, express themselves in an impressive and figurative manner. It has been often remarked, that indignation gives wit; and, as despair occasionally breaks out into laughter, it may sometimes also give vent to itself in antithetical comparisons.

"Besides, the rules of the ancient languages have not been duly weighed. Shakspeare, who was always sure of his effect, to move or astonish by perversion and error when he wished to do so, has occasionally, by another turn in a freer play, purposely moderated the impressions when too painful, and immediately introduced a musical alleviation of our sympathy. He has set those gross ideas of his age which many moderns seem to have, as if the poet, like the clown in the circus, must stake two on the same post. An ancient critic has delivered a caution against swelling too long on the description of pity; for nothing, he said, dries so soon as tears. Shakspeare [illegible] to the sighing moods [illegible]

"[illegible] Shakspeare [illegible] the operation [illegible] shows [illegible] sensuously, [illegible] the expression [illegible] our observation [illegible] has [illegible] words [illegible] and [illegible] Twelfth [illegible]

ought not to be a bad poet. Such poetry as a man deliberately writes, such, and such only will he like. Dr. Johnson's Preface to his edition of Shakspeare looks like a laborious attempt to bury the characteristic merits of his author under a load of cumbrous phraseology, and to weigh his excellences and defects in equal scales, stuffed full of "swelling figures and sonorous epithets." Nor could it well be otherwise; Dr. Johnson's general powers of reasoning overlaid his critical susceptibility. All his ideas were cast in a given mould, in a set form: they were made out by rule and system, by climax, inference, and antithesis: Shakspeare's were the reverse. Johnson's understanding dealt only in round numbers: the fractions were lost upon him. He reduced everything to the common standard of conventional propriety; and the most exquisite refinement or sublimity produced an effect on his mind, only as they could be translated into the language of measured prose. To him an excess of beauty was a fault; for it appeared to him like an excrescence; and his imagination was dazzled by the blaze of light. His writings neither shone with the beams of native genius, nor reflected them. The shifting shapes of fancy, the rainbow hues of things, made no impression on him: he seized only on the permanent and tangible. He had no idea of natural objects but "such as he could measure with a two-foot rule, or tell upon ten fingers:" he judged of human nature in the same way, by mood and figure: he saw only the definite, the positive, and the practical; the average forms of things, not their striking differences; their classes, not their degrees. He was a man of strong common sense and practical wisdom, rather than of genius and feeling. He retained the regular, habitual impressions of actual objects, but he could not follow

individual traits, or the *dramatic* distinctions which Shakspeare has engrafted on this general nature, because he felt no interest in them. Shakspeare's bold and happy flights of imagination were equally thrown away upon our author. He was not only without any particular fineness of organic sensibility, alive to all the "mighty world of ear and eye," which is necessary to the painter or musician, but without that intenseness of passion which, seeking to exaggerate whatever excites the feelings of pleasure or power in the mind, and moulding the impressions of natural objects according to the impulses of imagination, produces a genius and a taste for poetry. According to Dr. Johnson, a mountain is sublime, or a rose is beautiful; for that their name and definition imply. But he would no more be able to give the description of Dover cliff in *Lear*, or the description of flowers in *The Winter's Tale*, than to describe the objects of a sixth sense; nor do we think he would have any very profound feeling of the beauty of the passages here referred to. A stately common-place, such as Congreve's description of a ruin in *The Mourning Bride*, would have answered Johnson's purpose just as well, or better than the first; and an indiscriminate profusion of scents and hues would have interfered less with the ordinary routine of his imagination than Perdita's lines, which seem enamored of their own sweetness—

> ——— "Daffodils
> That come before the swallow dares, and take
> The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,
> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
> Or Cytherea's breath."

No one who does not feel the passion which these objects inspire can go along with the imagination which seeks to

"In his tragic scenes, there is always something wanting, but his comedy often surpasses expectation or desire. His comedy pleases by the thoughts and the language, and his tragedy, for the greater part, by incident and action. His tragedy seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct." Yet after saying that "his tragedy was skill," he affirms in the next page, "His declamations or set speeches are commonly cold and weak, *for his power was the power of nature:* when he endeavored, like other tragic writers, to catch opportunities of amplification, and instead of inquiring what the occasion demanded, to show how much his stores of knowledge could supply, he seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader." Poor Shakspeare! Between the charges here brought against him, of want of nature in the first instance, and of want of skill in the second, he could hardly escape being condemned. And again, "But the admirers of this great poet have most reason to complain when he approaches nearest to his highest excellence, and seems fully resolved to sink them in dejection, or mollify them with tender emotions by the fall of greatness, the danger of innocence, or the crosses of love. What he does best, he soon ceases to do. He no sooner begins to move than he counteracts himself; and terror and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity." In all this, our critic seems more bent on maintaining the equilibrium of his style than the consistency or truth of his opinions. If Dr. Johnson's opinion was right, the following observations on Shakspeare's Plays must be greatly exaggerated, if not ridiculous. If he was wrong, what has been said may perhaps account for his being so, without detracting from his ability and judgment in other things.

April 5, 1818.

CYMBELINE.

CYMBELINE is one of the most delightful of Shakspeare's historical plays. It may be considered as a dramatic romance, in which the [illegible] parts of the story are [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] dramatic [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] are [illegible] ... [illegible] concentrated [illegible] ... [illegible] ... [illegible] ... [illegible] ... [illegible] ... matter.

tive to the winding up of his plots. We think the contrary is true; and we might cite in proof of this remark not only the present play, but the conclusion of *Lear*, of *Romeo and Juliet*, of *Macbeth*, of *Othello*, even of *Hamlet*, and of other plays of less moment, in which the last act is crowded with decisive events brought about by natural and striking means.

The pathos in CYMBELINE is not violent or tragical, but of the most pleasing and amiable kind. A certain tender gloom overspreads the whole. Posthumus is the ostensible hero of the piece, but its greatest charm is the character of Imogen. Posthumus is only interesting from the interest she takes in him, and she is only interesting herself from her tenderness and constancy to her husband. It is the peculiar characteristic of Shakspeare's heroines that they seem to exist only in their attachment to others. They are pure abstractions of the affections. We think as little of their persons as they do themselves, because we are let into the secrets of their hearts, which are more important. We are too much interested in their affairs to stop to look at their faces, except by stealth and at intervals. No one ever hit the true perfection of the female character, the sense of weakness leaning on the strength of its affections for support, so well as Shakspeare —no one ever so well painted natural tenderness free from affectation and disguise—no one else ever so well showed how delicacy and timidity, when driven to extremity, grow romantic and extravagant; for the romance of his heroines (in which they abound) is only an excess of the habitual prejudices of their sex, scrupulous of being false to their vows, truant to the affections, and taught by the force of feeling when to forego the forms of propriety for the essence of it. His women are in this respect exquisite logicians; for there is nothing so logical as passion. They know their own minds exactly; and only follow up a favorite idea which they have sworn to with their tongues, and which is engraven on their hearts, into its untoward consequences. They are the prettiest little set of martyrs and confessors on record.—Cibber, in speaking of the early English stage, accounts for the want of prominence and theatrical display in Shakspeare's female characters from the circumstance, that women in those days were not allowed to play the parts of women,

while, made it necessary to keep these a good deal in the background. Does not this state of manners itself, which prevented their exhibiting themselves in public, and confined them to the recesses and charities of domestic life, afford a truer explanation of the matter? His women are certainly very unlike stage-heroines; the reverse of tragedy-queens.

We have almost as great an affection for Imogen as she had for Posthumus; and she deserves it better. Of all Shakspeare's women she is perhaps the most tender and the most artless. Her credulity in the opening scene with Iachimo, as to her husband's infidelity, is much the same as Desdemona's backwardness to believe Othello's jealousy. Her answer to the most distressing part of the picture is only, "My lord, I fear, has forgot Britain." Her passion for Posthumus, Iachimo's base imputations, and his own subsequent brutality, is a good lesson to gentles; and may show how much more is a real attachment to nature, it has need to be strengthened with understanding, or allied to any guilty device. The scene in which Pisanio gives Imogen her master's letter, accuses him of inconstancy on the treacherous suggestion of Iachimo, and "calling it as it is possible for any thing to be:—

I have heard I am a strumpet, and mine ear,
Therein false struck, can take no greater wound,
Nor tent to bottom that."———

When Pisanio, who had been charged to kill his mistress, puts her in a way to live, she says,

"Why, good fellow,
What shall I do the while? Where bide? How live:
Or in my life what comfort, when I am
Dead to my husband?"

Yet when he advises her to disguise herself in boy's clothes, and suggests "a course pretty and full in view," by which she may "happily be near the residence of Posthumus," she exclaims,

"Oh, for such means,
Though peril to my modesty, not death on't,
I would adventure."

And when Pisanio, enlarging on the consequences, tells her she must change

——— "Fear and niceness,
The handmaids of all women, or more truly,
Woman its pretty self, into a waggish courage,
Ready in gibes, quick answer'd, saucy, and
As quarrellous as the weazel"———

she interrupts him hastily;

"Nay, be brief;
I see into thy end, and am almost
A man already."

In her journey thus disguised to Milford-Haven, she loses her guide and her way; and unbosoming her complaints, says beautifully,—

—— —— "My dear Lord,
Thou art one of the false ones: now I think on thee,
My hunger's gone: but even before, I was
At point to sink for food."

She afterwards finds, as she thinks, the dead body of Posthumus, and engages herself as a foot-boy to serve a Roman officer, when she has done all due obsequies to him whom she calls her former master—

> ——"And when
> With wild wood-leaves and weeds I ha' strew'd his grave,
> And on it said a century of prayers,
> Such as I can, twice o'er, I'll weep and sigh,
> And leaving so his service, follow you,
> So please you entertain me."

Now this is the very religion of love. She all along relies little on her personal charms, which she fears may have been eclipsed by some painted jay of Italy; she relies on her merit, and her merit is in the depth of her love, her truth and constancy. Our admiration of her beauty is excited with as little consciousness as possible on her part. There are two delicate instances of this negative kind of description, one when she is supposed dead. Arviragus thus addresses her—

> ——"With fairest flowers,
> While summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]

The yellow Iachimo gives another, thus, when he steals into her bed-chamber:—

> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
>
> [illegible]
> [illegible] breast
> [illegible]
> [illegible]

There is a moral sense in the proud beauty of this last image, a rich surfeit of the fancy,—as that well-known passage beginning, "Me of my lawful pleasure she restrained, and prayed me oft forbearance," sets a keener edge upon it by the inimitable picture of modesty and self-denial.

The character of Cloten, the conceited, booby lord, and rejected lover of Imogen, though not very agreeable in itself, and at present obsolete, is drawn with great humor and knowledge of character. The description which Imogen gives of his unwelcome addresses to her—"Whose love-suit hath been to me as fearful as a siege"—is enough to cure the most ridiculous lover of his folly. It is remarkable, that though Cloten makes so poor a figure in love, he is described as assuming an air of consequence as the Queen's son in a council of state, and with all the absurdity of his person and manners, is not without shrewdness in his observations. So true is it that folly is as often owing to a want of proper sentiments as to a want of understanding! The exclamation of the ancient critic, Oh Menander and Nature, which of you copied from the other! would not be misapplied to Shakspeare.

The other characters in this play are represented with great truth and accuracy, and as it happens in most of the author's works, there is not only the utmost keeping in each separate character; but in the casting of the different parts, and their relation to one another, there is an affinity and harmony, like what we may observe in the gradations of color in a picture. The striking and powerful contrasts in which Shakspeare abounds could not escape observation: but the use he makes of the principle of analogy to reconcile the greatest diversities of character, and to maintain a continuity of feeling throughout, has not been sufficiently attended to. In CYMBELINE, for instance, the principal interest arises out of the unalterable fidelity of Imogen to her husband under the most trying circumstances. Now the other parts of the picture are filled up with subordinate examples of the same feeling, variously modified by different situations, and applied to the purposes of virtue or vice. The plot is aided by the amorous importunities of Cloten, by the tragical determination of Iachimo to conceal the defeat of his

The rain and wind beat dark December? How,
In this our pinching cave, shall we discourse
The freezing hours away? We have seen nothing.
We are beastly; subtle as the fox for prey,
Like warlike as the wolf for what we eat:
Our valor is to chase what flies; our cage
We make a quire, as doth the prison'd bird,.
And sing our bondage freely."

The answer of Bellarius to this expostulation is hardly satisfactory; for nothing can be an answer to hope, or the passion of the mind for unknown good, but experience.—The forest of Arden, in *As you like it*, can alone compare with the mountain scenes in CYMBELINE: yet how different the contemplative quiet of the one from the enterprising boldness and precarious mode of subsistence in the other! Shakspeare not only lets us into the minds of his characters, but gives a tone and color to the scenes he describes from the feelings of their imaginary inhabitants. He at the same time preserves the utmost propriety of action and passion, and gives all their local accompaniments. If he was equal to the greatest things, he was not above an attention to the smallest. Thus the gallant sportsmen in CYMBELINE have to encounter the abrupt declivities of hill and valley: Touchstone and Audrey jog along a level path. The deer in CYMBELINE are only regarded as objects of prey, "The game's a-foot," &c.,—with Jaques they are fine subjects to moralize upon at leisure, "under the shade of melancholy boughs."

We cannot take leave of this play, which is a favorite with us, without noticing some occasional touches of natural piety and morality. We may allude here to the opening of the scene in which Bellarius instructs the young princes to pay their orisons to heaven:—

——"See boys! this gate
Instructs you how t' adore the Heav'ns; and bows yo
To morning's holy office.
GUIDERIUS. Hail, Heaven!
ARVIRAGUS. Hail, Heaven!
BELLARIUS. Now for our mountain-sport, up to yon hill"

What a [illegible] and [illegible] in this passage! [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] as [illegible] introduced in the [illegible] away, [illegible] to attend her when sick, and gives her reason [illegible]—

[illegible]

W[illegible] Q[illegible] [illegible] by [illegible] and a [illegible] lesson of humanity:—

———— "Your H[illegible]ss
Shall from this practice but make hard your heart."

MACBETH.

MACBETH and *Lear*, *Othello* and *Hamlet*, are usually reckoned Shakspeare's four principal tragedies. *Lear* stands first for the profound intensity of the passion; *Macbeth* for the wildness of the imagination and the rapidity of the action; *Othello* for the progressive interest and powerful alternations of feeling; *Hamlet* for the refined development of thought and sentiment. If the force of genius shown in each of these works is astonishing, their variety is not less so. They are like different creations of the same mind, not one of which has the slightest reference to the rest. This distinctness and originality is indeed the necessary consequence of truth and nature. Shakspeare's genius alone appeared to possess the resources of nature. He is "your only *tragedy-maker*." His plays have the force of things upon the mind. What he represents is brought home to the bosom as a part of our experience, implanted in the memory as if we had known the places, persons, and things of which he treats. MACBETH is like a record of a preternatural and tragical event. It has the rugged severity of an old chronicle, with all that the imagination of the poet can engraft upon traditional belief. The castle of Macbeth, round which "the air smells wooingly" and where "the temple-haunting martlet builds," has a real subsistence in the mind; the Weird Sisters meet us in person on "the blasted heath;" the "air-drawn dagger" moves slowly before our eyes; the "gracious Duncan," the "blood-boltered Banquo" stand before us; all that passed through the mind of Macbeth passes, without the loss of a tittle, through our's. All that could actually take place, and all that is only possible to be conceived, what was said and what was done, the workings of passion, the spells of magic, are brought before us with the same

the

This part of his character is admirably set off by being brought in connection with that of Lady Macbeth, whose obdurate strength of will and masculine firmness give her the ascendency over her husband's faltering virtue. She at once seizes on the opportunity that offers for the accomplishment of their wished-for greatness, and never flinches from her object till all is over. The magnitude of her resolution almost covers the magnitude of her guilt. She is a great bad woman, whom we hate, but whom we fear more than we hate. She does not excite our loathing and abhorrence like Regan and Goneril. She is only wicked to gain a great end; and is perhaps more distinguished by her commanding presence of mind and inexorable self-will, which do not suffer her to be diverted from a bad purpose, when once formed, by weak and womanly regrets, than by the hardness of her heart or want of natural affections. The impression which her lofty determination of character makes on the mind of Macbeth is well described where he exclaims,

> ——— "Bring forth men children only;
> For thy undaunted mettle should compose
> Nothing but males!"

Nor do the pains she is at to "screw his courage to the sticking-place," the reproach to him, not to be "lost so poorly in himself," the assurance that "a little water clears them of this deed," show anything but her greater consistency in wickedness. Her strong-nerved ambition furnishes ribs of steel to "the sides of his intent;" and she is herself wound up to the execution of her baneful project with the same unshrinking fortitude in crime, that in other circumstances she would probably have shown patience in suffering. The deliberate sacrifice of all other considerations to the gaining "for their future days and nights sole sovereign sway and masterdom," by the murder of Duncan, is gorgeously expressed in her invocation on hearing of "his fatal entrance under her battlements:"—

> —— — "Come all you spirits
> That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here:
> And fill me, from the crown to th' toe, top-full
> Of direst cruelty; make thick my blood,

common feelings of compassion and justice, which is so marked a feature in barbarous nations and times. A passing reflection of this kind, on the resemblance of the sleeping king to her father, alone prevents her from slaying Duncan with her own hand.

In speaking of the character of Lady Macbeth, we ought not to pass over Mrs. Siddons's manner of acting that part. We can conceive of nothing grander. It was something above nature. It seemed almost as if a being of a superior order had dropped from a higher sphere to awe the world with the majesty of her appearance. Power was seated on her brow, passion emanated from her breast as from a shrine; she was tragedy personified. In coming on in the sleeping scene, her eyes were open, but their sense was shut. She was like a person bewildered and unconscious of what she did. Her lips moved involuntarily—all her gestures were involuntary and mechanical. She glided on and off the stage like an apparition. To have seen her in that character was an event in every one's life, not to be forgotten.

The dramatic beauty of the character of Duncan, which excites the respect and pity even of his murderers, has been often pointed out. It forms a picture of itself. An instance of the author's power of giving a striking effect to a common reflection, by the manner of introducing it, occurs in a speech of Duncan, complaining of his having been deceived in his opinion of the Thane of Cawdor, at the very moment that he is expressing the most unbounded confidence in the loyalty and service of Macbeth.

> "There is no art
> To find the mind's construction in the face:
> He was a gentleman, on whom I built
> An absolute trust.
> O worthiest cousin, (*addressing himself to Macbeth*)
> The sin of my ingratitude e'en now
> Was heavy upon me," &c.

Another passage to show that Shakspeare lost sight of nothing that could in any way give relief or heightening to his subject, is the conversation which takes place between Banquo and Fleance immediately before the murder of Duncan.

"Banquo. Thou hast it now: King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird women promised, and I fear
Thou play'dst most foully for't: yet it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity,
But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them—
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine—
Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well,
And set me up in hope? But hush, no more.

Here Macbeth and Banquo see a vision of the witches crowning one of Banquo's descendants King of Scotland.

"Macbeth. What's this, that rises like the issue of a king,
And wears upon his baby brow the round
And top of sovereignty?

First Witch. Listen, but speak not to't.

Second Witch. Show his eyes, and grieve his heart;
Come like shadows, so depart.

Macbeth. A line of eight kings, and the last with a glass in his hand, and many more with glasses. Horrible sight! Now I see 'tis true; for the blood-boltered Banquo smiles upon me, and points at them for his. What, is this so?

First Witch. Ay, sir, all this is so. But why stands Macbeth thus amazedly? Come, sisters, cheer we up his sprites, and show the best of our delights. I'll charm the air to give a sound, while you perform your antic round, that this great king may kindly say our duties did his welcome pay.

Music. The witches dance and vanish.

Macbeth. Where are they? Gone? Let this pernicious hour stand aye accursed in the calendar! Come in, without there!

Lennox. What's your grace's will?

Macbeth. Saw you the weird sisters?

Lennox. No, my lord.

Macbeth. Came they not by you?

Lennox. No, indeed, my lord.

Macbeth. Infected be the air whereon they ride, and damned all those that trust them! I did hear the galloping of horse: who was't came by?

Lennox. 'Tis two or three, my lord, that bring you word Macduff is fled to England.

Macbeth. Fled to England!

Lennox. Ay, my good lord.

Macbeth. Time, thou anticipatest my dread exploits: the flighty purpose never is o'ertook unless the deed go with it. From this moment the very firstlings of my heart shall be the firstlings of my hand. And even now, to crown my thoughts with acts, be it thought and done: the castle of Macduff I will surprise; seize upon Fife; give to the edge o' the sword his wife, his babes, and all unfortunate souls that trace him in his line. But no more sights! Where are these gentlemen? Come, bring me where they are.

they sicken." "Look like the innocent flower, but be the serpent under it." The scene before the castle-gate follows the appearance of the Witches on the heath, and is followed by a midnight murder. Duncan is cut off betimes by treason leagued with witchcraft, and Macduff is ripped untimely from his mother's womb to avenge his death. Macbeth, after the death of Banquo, wishes for his presence in extravagant terms. "To him and all we thirst," and when his ghost appears, cries out, "Avaunt and quit my sight," and being gone, he is "himself again." Macbeth resolves to get rid of Macduff, that "he may sleep in spite of thunder;" and cheers his wife on the doubtful intelligence of Banquo's taking off with the encouragement—"Then be thou jocund: ere the bat has flown his cloistered flight; ere to black Hecate's summons the shard-born beetle has rung night's yawning peal, there shall be done—a deed of dreadful note." In Lady Macbeth's speech, "Had he not resembled my father as he slept, I had done 't," there is murder and filial piety together; and in urging him to fulfil his vengeance against the defenceless king, her thoughts spare the blood neither of infants nor old age. The description of the Witches is full of the same contradictory principle; they "rejoice when good kings bleed," "they are neither of the earth nor the air, but both; they should be women, but their beards forbid it;" they take all the pains possible to lead Macbeth on to the height of his ambition, only to betray him in deeper consequence, and after showing him all the pomp of their art, discover their malignant delight in his disappointed hopes, by that bitter taunt, "Why stands Macbeth thus amazedly?" We might multiply such instances everywhere.

The leading features in the character of Macbeth are striking enough, and they form what may be thought at first only a bold rude, Gothic outline. By comparing it with other characters of the same author we shall perceive the absolute truth and identity which is observed in the midst of the giddy whirl and rapid career of events. Macbeth in Shakspeare no more loses his identity of character in the fluctuations of fortune or the storm of passion, than Macbeth in himself would have lost the identity of his person. The genius of Shakspeare was as much

shown in the subtlety and nice discrimination, as in the force and variety of his characters. This distinction is not preserved more completely in those which are the most opposite, than in those which, in their general features and obvious appearance, most nearly resemble each other. It has been observed, with very little exaggeration, that not one of his speeches could be put into the mouth of any other character than the one to which it is given, and that the transposition, if attempted, might be always detected from some other circumstance in the passage itself. If to *speak according to nature* be the true criterion of genius, Shakespeare had more of this quality than any other writer. [illegible] details, the particular accidents, have the fidelity of history without [illegible]

[illegible]

that are the most alike are distinguished by positive differences, which accompany and modify the leading principle of the character through its most obscure ramifications, embodying the habits, gestures, and almost the looks of the individual. These touches of nature are often so many, and so minute, that the poet cannot be supposed to have been distinctly aware of the operation of the springs by which his imagination was set at work: yet every one of the results is brought out with a truth and clearness, as if his whole study had been directed to that peculiar trait of character or subordinate train of feeling.

Thus MACBETH and *Richard III.*, *King Henry VI.* and *Richard II.*—characters that, in their general description, and in common hands, and indeed in the hands of any other poet, would be merely repetitions of the same general idea, more or less exaggerated—are distinguished by traits as precise, though of course less violent, than those which separate MACBETH from *Henry VI.*, or *Richard III.* from *Richard II.* Shakspeare has with wonderful accuracy, and without the smallest appearance of effort, varied the portraits of imbecility and effeminacy in the two deposed monarchs. With still more powerful and masterly strokes he has marked the different effects of ambition and cruelty, operating on different dispositions and in different circumstances, in his MACBETH and *Richard III.* Both are tyrants, usurpers, murderers, both violent and ambitious, both courageous, cruel, treacherous. But Richard is cruel from nature and constitution. Macbeth becomes so from accidental circumstances. Richard is from his birth deformed in body and mind, and naturally incapable of good. Macbeth is full of "the milk of human kindness," is frank, sociable, generous. He is urged to the commission of guilt by golden opportunity, by the instigations of his wife, and by prophetic warnings. "Fate and metaphysical aid" conspire against his virtue and his loyalty. Richard on the contrary needs no prompter, but wades through a series of crimes to the height of his ambition, from the ungovernable violence of his passions and a restless love of mischief. He is never gay but in the prospect, or in the success of his villanies; Macbeth is full of horror at the thoughts of the murder of Duncan, which he is with difficulty prevailed

world of

fancy. He sees sights not shown to mortal eye, and hears unearthly music. All is tumult and disorder within and without his mind; his purposes recoil upon himself, are broken and disjointed; he is the double thrall of his passions and his evil destiny. He treads upon the brink of fate and grows dizzy with his situation. Richard is not a character either of imagination or pathos, but of pure will. There is no conflict of opposite feelings in his breast. The apparitions which he sees only haunt him in his sleep; nor does he live like Macbeth in a waking dream. There is nothing tight or compact in Macbeth, no tenseness of fibre, nor pointed decision of manner. He has indeed considerable energy and manliness of soul; but then he is "subject to all the skyey influences." He is sure of nothing. All is left at issue. He runs a tilt with fortune, and is baffled with preternatural riddles. The agitation of his mind resembles the rolling of the sea in a storm, or he is like a lion in the toils—fierce, impetuous, and ungovernable. Richard, in the busy turbulence of his projects, never loses his self-possession, and makes use of every circumstance that occurs as an instrument of his long-reaching designs. In his last extremity we can only regard him as a captured wild beast, but we never entirely lose our concern for Macbeth, and he calls back all our sympathy by that fine close of thoughtful melancholy—

> "My way of life is fallen into the sear,
> The yellow leaf; and that which should accompany old age,
> As honor, troops of friends, I must not look to have;
> But in their stead, curses not loud but deep,
> Mouth-honor, breath, which the poor heart
> Would fain deny, and dare not."

We can conceive a common actor to play Richard tolerably well; we can conceive no one to play Macbeth properly, or to look like a man who had encountered the Weird Sisters. All the actors that we have seen, appear as if they had encountered them on the boards of Covent Garden or Drury Lane, but not on the heath at Foris, and as if they did not believe what they had seen. The Witches of MACBETH, indeed, are ridiculous on the modern stage, and we doubt if the Furies of Æschylus would

be more respected. The progress of manners and knowledge has an influence on the stage, and will in time perhaps destroy both tragedy and comedy. Filch's picking pockets in the *Beggar's Opera* is not so good a jest as it used to be; by the force of the police and of philosophy, Lillo's murders and the ghosts in Shakspeare will become obsolete. At last, there will be nothing left, good nor bad, to be desired or dreaded, on the theatre or in real life. The question which has been started with respect to the originality of Shakspeare's Witches, has been well answered by Mr. Lamb in his notes to the "Specimens of Early Dramatic Poetry."

"Though some resemblance may be traced between the charms in Macbeth, and the incantations in this play (the Witch of Middleton), which is supposed to have preceded it, this coincidence will not detract much from the originality of Shakspeare. His Witches are distinguished from the Witches of Middleton by [illegible]. These are creatures to whom man or [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] ring, and vanish to airy music. This is all we know of them. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] mind! [illegible] *[illegible] o'er the.*"

JULIUS CÆSAR.

JULIUS CÆSAR was one of three principal plays by different authors, pitched upon by the celebrated Earl of Halifax to be brought out, in a splendid manner, by subscription, in the year 1707. The other two were the *King and no King* of Fletcher, and Dryden's *Maiden Queen*. There perhaps might be political reasons for this selection, as far as regards our author. Otherwise Shakspeare's JULIUS CÆSAR is not equal, as a whole, to either of his other plays, taken from the Roman history. It is inferior in interest to *Coriolanus*, and, both in interest and power, to *Antony and Cleopatra*. It, however, abounds in admirable and affecting passages, and is remarkable for the profound knowledge of character, in which Shakspeare could scarcely fail. If there is any exception to this remark, it is in the hero of the piece himself. We do not much admire the representation here given of Julius Cæsar, nor do we think it answers to the portrait given of him in his Commentaries. He makes several vaporing and rather pedantic speeches, and does nothing. Indeed, he has nothing to do. So far the fault of the character might be the fault of the plot.

The spirit with which the poet has entered at once into the manners of the common people, and the jealousies and heart-burnings of the different factions, is shown in the first scene, when Flavius and Marullus, tribunes of the people, and some citizens of Rome, appear upon the stage.

"FLAVIUS. Thou art a cobler, art thou?

COBLER. Truly, Sir, *all* that I live by, is the *awl*: I meddle with no trade—man's matters, nor woman's matters, but *with-al*, I am indeed, Sir, a surgeon to old shoes; when they are in great danger, I recover them

To this specimen of quaint low humour immediately follows the unexpected and animated burst of indignant eloquence, put into the mouth of one of the angry tribunes.

"Marullus. Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?
What tributaries follow him to Rome,
To grace in captive bonds his chariot wheels?
You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!
O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
Have you climbed up to walls and battlements,
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney tops,
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat
The livelong day, with patient expectation,
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome:
And when you saw his chariot but appear,
Have you not made an universal shout,
That Tiber trembled underneath her banks
To hear the replication of your sounds
Made in her concave shores?
And do you now put on your best attire?
And do you now cull out a holiday?
And do you now strew flowers in his way
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?
Be gone!
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
Pray to the gods to intermit the plague
That needs must light on this ingratitude."

[illegible] Brutus and Cassius [illegible] which Cæsar enters with [illegible]

"BRUTUS. The games are done, and Cæsar is returning.
CASSIUS. As they pass by, pluck Casca by the sleeve,
And he will, after his sour fashion, tell you
What has proceeded worthy note to-day.
BRUTUS. I will do so; but look you, Cassius—
The angry spot doth glow on Cæsar's brow,
And all the rest look like a chidden train.
Calphurnia's cheek is pale; and Cicero
Looks with such ferret and such fiery eyes,
As we have seen him in the Capitol,
Being crost in conference by some senators.
CASSIUS. Casca will tell us what the matter is.
CÆSAR. Antonius——
ANTONY. Cæsar?
CÆSAR. Let me have men about me that are fat,
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep a-nights:
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look,
He thinks too much; such men are dangerous.
ANTONY. Fear him not, Cæsar; he's not dangerous;
He is a noble Roman, and well given.
CÆSAR. Would he were fatter; but I fear him not:
Yet if my name were liable to fear,
I do not know the man I should avoid
So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much;
He is a great observer; and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony: he hears no music:
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort,
As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit,
That could be mov'd to smile at anything.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease,
Whilst they behold a greater than themselves:
And therefore are they very dangerous.
I rather tell thee what is to be fear'd
Than what I fear; for always I am Cæsar
Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,
And tell me truly what thou think'st of him."

We know hardly any passage more expressive of the genius of Shakspeare than this. It is as if he had been actually present, had known the different characters, and what they thought of one another, and had taken down what he heard and saw, their looks, words, and gestures, just as they happened.

The character of Mark Antony is farther speculated upon

where the conspirators deliberate whether he shall fall with Cæsar. Brutus is against it —

> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]

They were right: wrong; and Cæsar's was the

[illegible] Brutus [illegible] to find [illegible] enterprise, [illegible] and [illegible] vanity.

> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]

[illegible]

at nothing to accomplish them. Cassius was better cut out for a conspirator. His heart prompted his head. His habitual jealousy made him fear the worst that might happen, and his irritability of temper added to his inveteracy of purpose, and sharpened his patriotism. The mixed nature of his motives made him fitter to contend with bad men. The vices are never so well employed as in combating one another. Tyranny and servility are to be dealt with after their own fashion, or they will triumph over those who spare them.

The quarrel between Brutus and Cassius is managed in a masterly way. The dramatic fluctuation of passion, the calmness of Brutus, the heat of Cassius, are admirably described; and the exclamation of Cassius on hearing of the death of Portia, which he does not learn till after their reconciliation, "How 'scap'd I killing when I crost you so?" gives double force to all that has gone before. The scene between Brutus and Portia, where she endeavors to extort the secret of the conspiracy from him, is conceived in the most heroical spirit, and the burst of tenderness in Brutus—

> "You are my true and honorable wife,
> As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
> That visit my sad heart,"—

is justified by her whole behavior. Portia's breathless impatience to learn the event of the conspiracy, in the dialogue with Lucius, is full of passion. The interest which Portia takes in Brutus, and that which Calphurnia takes in the fate of Cæsar, are discriminated with the nicest precision. Mark Antony's speech over the dead body of Cæsar has been justly admired for the mixture of pathos and artifice in it: that of Brutus certainly is not so good.

The entrance of the conspirators to the house of Brutus at midnight is rendered very impressive. In the midst of this scene, we meet with one of those careless and natural digressions which occur so frequently and beautifully in Shakspeare. After Cassius has introduced his friends one by one, Brutus says,

"They are all well armed.

What manner of man is this?

Brutus. It is Lucius.

Cassius. Now I know you for a man of men. (*Aside.*)

I will trust you.

Brutus. Good words are better than bad strokes, Lucius.

Cassius. Nay, I know that well enough.

Brutus. Why, sir, you have done me no harm.

Cassius. Why, then, I am glad of it.

Here is my hand. You shall be as great in Rome as Brutus.

Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world,

Like a Colossus, and we petty men

Walk under his huge legs, and peep about

To find ourselves dishonourable graves.

Men at some time are masters of their fates:

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,

But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

Brutus and Cæsar: what should be in that Cæsar?

Why should that name be sounded more than yours?

Write them together, yours is as fair a name;

Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;

Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure with 'em,

Brutus will start a spirit as soon as Cæsar."

We [illegible] familiarly better than all [illegible] Tragedy of JULIUS CÆSAR [illegible] effect. The [illegible] of [illegible] are represented [illegible] Brutus [illegible] has the [illegible] Shakespeare. But [illegible] perhaps better than of her, is the little incident of [illegible] Lucius [illegible] over his instrument, as he is playing [illegible] before the battle. Nature [illegible] the [illegible] once before on the night [illegible] The [illegible] of Brutus is the same on both [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] of sleep?

[illegible]

[illegible] of men.

Therefore thou sleepest so sound."

OTHELLO.

It has been said that tragedy purifies the affections by terror and pity. That is, it substitutes imaginary sympathy for mere selfishness. It gives us a high and permanent interest, beyond ourselves, in humanity as such. It raises the great, the remote, and the possible to an equality with the little, the near, and the real. It makes man a partaker with his kind. It subdues and softens the stubbornness of his will. It teaches him that there are and have been others like himself, by showing him as in a glass what they have felt, thought, and done. It opens the chambers of the human heart. It leaves nothing indifferent to us that can affect our common nature. It excites our sensibility by exhibiting the passions wound up to the utmost pitch of the power of imagination or the temptation of circumstances; and corrects their fatal excesses in ourselves by pointing to the greater extent of sufferings and crimes to which they have led others. Tragedy creates a balance of the affections. It makes us thoughtful spectators in the lists of life. It is the refiner of the species; a discipline of humanity. The habitual study of poetry and works of imagination is one chief part of a well-grounded education. A taste for liberal art is necessary to complete the character of a gentleman. Science alone is hard and mechanical. It exercises the understanding upon things out of ourselves, while it leaves the affections unemployed, or engrossed with our own immediate, narrow interests.—Othello furnishes an illustration of these remarks. It excites our sympathy in an extraordinary degree. The moral it conveys has a closer application to the concerns of human life than that of any other of

Shakspeare's plays. "It comes directly home to the business and bosoms of men." The passion in *Lear* is more impetuous and overpowering: but it is less natural, and less of every day's occurrence. We have not the same degree of sympathy with the passion as in that in *Macbeth*. The interest in *Hamlet* is more remote and reflex. That of Othello is at once equally profound and affecting.

The picturesque contrasts of character in this play are almost as remarkable as the depth of the passion. The Moor Othello, the gentle Desdemona, the villain Iago, the good-natured Cassio, the frank Roderigo, present a range and variety of character as striking and palpable as that produced by the opposition of colours in a picture. Their distinguishing qualities stand out to the mind's eye [illegible] we are not thinking of their [illegible] present [illegible] The character and the [illegible] stamp upon [illegible] the [illegible] to [illegible] yet the [illegible] present [illegible] with [illegible] extreme [illegible] only [illegible] the [illegible] to [illegible] specific [illegible] the [illegible] Othello [illegible] the [illegible] where [illegible] to [illegible] with [illegible] at [illegible] with [illegible] have [illegible] Cassio [illegible] E [illegible] rank [illegible]

ments is however laid as open, their minds separated from each other by signs as plain and as little to be mistaken, as the complexions of their husbands.

The movement of the passion in Othello is exceedingly different from that of Macbeth. In Macbeth there is a violent struggle between opposite feelings, between ambition and the stings of conscience, almost from first to last: in Othello, the doubtful conflict between contrary passions, though dreadful, continues only for a short time, and the chief interest is excited by the alternate ascendency of different passions, the entire and unforeseen change from the fondest love and most unbounded confidence to the tortures of jealousy and the madness of hatred. The revenge of Othello, after it has once taken thorough possession of his mind, never quits it, but grows stronger and stronger at every moment of its delay. The nature of the Moor is noble, confiding, tender, and generous; but his blood is of the most inflammable kind; and being once roused by a sense of his wrongs, he is stopped by no considerations of remorse or pity till he has given a loose to all the dictates of his rage and his despair. It is in working his noble nature up to this extremity through rapid but gradual transitions, in raising passion to its height from the smallest beginnings and in spite of all obstacles, in painting the expiring conflict between love and hatred, tenderness and resentment, jealousy and remorse, in unfolding the strength and weaknesses of our nature, in uniting sublimity of thought with the anguish of the keenest wo, in putting in motion the various impulses that agitate this our mortal being, and at last blending them in that noble tide of deep and sustained passion, impetuous but majestic, that "flows on to the Propontic, and knows no ebb," that Shakspeare has shown the mastery of his genius and of his power over the human heart. The third act of Othello is his master-piece, not of knowledge or passion separately, but of the two combined; of the knowledge of character with the expression of passion, of consummate art in the keeping up of appearances with the profound workings of nature, and the convulsive movements of uncontrollable agony, of the power of inflicting torture and of suffering it. Not only is the tumult of passion heaved up from the very bottom of the soul, but

his grief and tenderness have had their vent in that passionate apostrophe, "I felt not Cassio's kisses on her lips," Iago by false aspersions, and by presenting the most revolting images to his mind,* easily turns the storm of passion from himself against Desdemona, and works him up into a trembling agony of doubt and fear, in which he abandons all his love and hopes in a breath.

> "Now do I see 't is true. Look here, Iago,
> All my fond love thus do I blow to Heav'n. 'T is gone.
> Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow hell;
> Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne
> To tyrannous hate! Swell, bosom, with thy fraught;
> For 't is of aspics' tongues"

From this time, his raging thoughts "never look back, ne'er ebb to humble love," till his revenge is sure of its object, the painful regrets and involuntary recollections of past circumstances which cross his mind amidst the dim trances of passion, aggravating the sense of his wrongs, but not shaking his purpose. Once, indeed, where Iago shows him Cassio with the handkerchief in his hand, and making sport (as he thinks) of his misfortunes, the intolerable bitterness of his feelings, the extreme sense of shame, makes him fall to praising her accomplishments, and relapse into a momentary fit of weakness. "Yet the pity of it, Iago!—O, Iago, the pity of it!" But this returning fondness only serves, as it is managed by Iago, to whet his revenge, and set his heart more against her. In his conversations with Desdemona, the persuasion of her guilt, and the immediate proofs of her duplicity seem to irritate his resentment and aversion to her; but in the scene immediately preceding her death, the recollection of his love returns upon him in all its tenderness and force: and after her death, he all at once forgets his wrongs in the sudden and irreparable sense of his loss:

> "My wife! my wife! what wife? I have no wife.
> Oh insupportable! oh heavy hour!"

* See the passage beginning, "It is impossible you should see this, were they as prime as goats," &c.

This supposition, though it carries with it a degree of probability, may yet admit a doubt. The strength of circumstances is terrible indeed; but still it is but circumstance, and may conceal some unseen and unknown principle of action. Iago, for aught that appears in this play, may have been villainously slandered; and though it is natural to conjecture, yet it is but conjecture, that he has done more than has been attributed to him. Nothing but his own confession can thoroughly convict him; and that confession cannot be extorted by any human power.

But, though the judgment may be perplexed in the search of motives, the heart feels its way to justice with unerring sensibility. Our delight in the final detection and punishment of villainy is immediate and intuitive. We rejoice at the discovery of Iago, and exult in the fall of the proud and insolent Moor, who presumed to treat the Venetian senate with contempt.

Of the scenes which are subordinate to the great design, and which conduct the different parts to the general catastrophe, the first that claims notice is the arrival of the Moor at Cyprus, with the account of the tempest that separates his fleet, and destroys the navy of the Turks, now bent for the conquest of the island. The broken expressions of the herald, who cannot tell what he knows, and knows what he cannot tell distinctly, fill the mind with a promiscuous idea of tempestuous magnificence, which is very properly succeeded by the entrance of Montano and the gentlemen, who tell in plain terms the event of the storm.

"I will, my Lord.
ÆMILIA. How goes it now? *He looks gentler than he did.*"

Shakspeare has here put into half a line what some authors would have spun out into ten set speeches.

The character of Desdemona herself is inimitable both in itself, and as it contrasts with Othello's groundless jealousy, and with the foul conspiracy of which she is the innocent victim. Her beauty and external graces are only indirectly glanced at; we see "her visage in her mind;" her character everywhere predominates over her person.

> "A maiden never bold:
> Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
> Blushed at itself."

There is one fine compliment paid to her by Cassio, who exclaims triumphantly when she comes ashore at Cyprus after the storm,

> "Tempests themselves, high seas, and howling winds,
> As having sense of beauty, do omit
> Their mortal natures, letting safe go by
> The divine Desdemona."

In general, as is the case with most of Shakspeare's females, we lose sight of her personal charms in her attachment and devotedness to her husband. "She is subdued even to the very quality of her lord;" and to Othello's "honors and his valiant parts her soul and fortunes consecrates." The lady protests so much herself, and she is as good as her word. The truth of conception, with which timidity and boldness are united in the same character, is marvellous. The extravagance of her resolutions, the pertinacity of her affections, may be said to arise out of the gentleness of her nature. They imply an unreserved reliance on the purity of her own intentions, an entire surrender of her fears to her love, a knitting of herself (heart and soul) to the fate of another. Bating the commencement of her passion, which is a little fantastical and headstrong (though even that may perhaps be consistently accounted for from her ina

lady to resist a rising inclination ; her whole character consists in having no will of her own, no prompter but her obedience. Her romantic turn is only a consequence of the domestic and practical part of her composition ; and instead of following Othello to the wars she would gladly have "remained at home a motionet peace," if her husband could have stayed with her. Her [illegible] and angelic sweetness of temper do not suit her at the last. The scenes in which she laments and tries to account for Othello's estrangement from her are exquisitely pathetic. After he has struck her, and called her names, she says,

[illegible]

The [illegible] of the Willow, [illegible] some [illegible] and [illegible] circumstances.

[illegible]

"[illegible]
Othello [illegible]."

Not the unjust suspicions of Othello, not Iago's treachery, place Desdemona in a more amiable or interesting light than the casual conversation (half earnest, half jest) between her and Æmilia, on the common behavior of women to their husbands. This dialogue takes place just before the last fatal scene. If Othello had overheard it, it would have prevented the whole catastrophe; but then it would have spoiled the play.

The character of Iago is one of the supererogations of Shakspeare's genius. Some persons, more nice than wise, have thought this whole character unnatural, because his villainy is *without a sufficient motive*. Shakspeare, who was as good a philosopher as he was a poet, thought otherwise. He knew that the love of power, which is another name for the love of mischief, is natural to man. He would know this as well or better than if it had been demonstrated to him by a logical diagram, merely from seeing children paddle in the dirt, or kill flies for sport. We might ask those who think the character of Iago not natural, why they go to see it performed, but from the interest it excites, the sharper edge which it sets on the curiosity and imagination? Why do they go to see tragedies in general? Why do we always read the accounts in the newspapers of dreadful fires and shocking murders, but for the same reason? Why do so many persons frequent trials and executions, or why do the lower classes almost universally take delight in barbarous sports and cruelty to animals, but because there is a natural tendency in the mind to strong excitement, a desire to have its faculties roused and stimulated to the utmost? Whenever this principle is not under the restraint of humanity, or the sense of moral obligation, there are no excesses to which it will not of itself give rise, without the assistance of any other motive, either of passion or self-interest. Iago in fact belongs to a class of characters common to Shakspeare, and at the same time peculiar to him; whose heads are as acute and active as their hearts are hard and callous. Iago is, to be sure, an extreme instance of the kind; that is to say, of diseased intellectual activity, with an almost perfect indifference to moral good or evil, or rather with a decided preference of the latter, because it falls more readily in with his favorite propensity, gives greater zest to his

thoughts and scope to his actions. Be it observed, too (for the sake of those who are for squaring all human actions by the maxims of Rochefoucauld), that he is quite or nearly as indifferent to his own fate as to that of others: he runs all risks for a trifling and doubtful advantage; and is himself the dupe and victim of his ruling passion—an insatiable craving after action of the most difficult and dangerous kind. "Our ancient" is a philosopher, who fancies that a lie that kills has more point in it than an alteration or an antithesis; who thinks a fatal experiment on the peace of a family a better thing than watching the palpitations in the heart of a flea in a microscope; who plots the ruin of his friends as an exercise for his ingenuity, and stabs them in the dark to prove *cause*. Now this, though it be not good, is dramatic spirit. There is no room for trifling and indifference, nor scarcely for the appearance of it: the very existence who's part is to keep a tragedy standing on the stage is a state of watch and ward, an agony of breathless suspense, without a moment's interval for repose. He has a desperate game to play, for life and death, with fortune and his fellow-men, and he sits down to it as in earnest, and plays it out like a man, with head and hand, with every faculty and every passion that he has, for the whole stock of his sober circumspection, his dark duplicity, and smiling cruelty. He resembles a man who sets down to play at chess for the sake of the subtlety and complexity of the game, and who accidentally becomes absorbed in it. His amusement is a serious occupation, his very sport is earnest and anxious—his life is at stake. He is not, indeed, so deeply versed in the game as his opponent, but he is more than a match for all the rest of the players.

In every other circumstance permitted it, the part he has to play with Othello requires that he should assume the most candid appearances, and maintain all the plausibility of a confidential friend, with a slight tinge of bluntness, with a sigh like Timon's at times, and frequently called "honest Iago," which testifies to the world his unaffected openness in his appearance as well as his real character. The tone which he adopts in addressing Roderigo, Desdemona, and Cassio, is equally remote from the mysterious haughtiness of the villain, yet there is still the reserve of an inveterate misanthropy, a liberality

keenness of perception, which is always sagacious of evil, and snuffs up the tainted scent of its quarry with rancorous delight.

The general ground-work of the character, however, is not absolute malignity, but a want of moral principle, or an indifference to the real consequences of the actions, which the meddling perversity of his disposition, and love of immediate excitement, lead him to commit. He is an amateur of tragedy in real life, and instead of exercising his ingenuity on imaginary characters, or long-forgotten incidents, he takes the bolder and more desperate course of getting up his plot at home, casts the principal parts among his nearest friends and connexions, and rehearses it in downright earnest, with steady nerves and unabated resolution. The character is a complete abstraction of the intellectual from the moral being; or, in other words, consists in an absorption of every common feeling in the virulence of his understanding, the deliberate wilfulness of his purposes, and his restless, untameable love of mischievous contrivance.

In the general dialogue and reflections, which are an accompaniment to the progress of the catastrophe, there is a constant overflowing of gall and bitterness. The acuteness of his malice fastens upon everything alike, and pursues the most distant analogy of evil with provoking sagacity. His mirth is not natural and cheerful, but forced and extravagant, partaking of the intense activity of mind and cynical contempt of others in which it originates. Iago is not, like Candide, a believer in optimism, but seems to have a thorough hatred or distrust of everything of the kind, and to dwell with gloating satisfaction on whatever can interrupt the enjoyment of others, and gratify his moody irritability.

One of his most characteristic speeches is that immediately after the marriage of Othello.

> "Roderigo. What a full fortune does the thick lips owe
> If he can carry't thus!
> Iago. Call up her father:
> Rouse him (*Othello*), make after him, poison his delight,
> Proclaim him in the streets, incense her kinsmen:
> And though he in a fertile climate dwell,
> Plague him with flies: though that his joy be joy,

Yet this was such chances of vexation on't,
As it may lose some colour."

The pertinacious logical following up of his favorite principle in this passage is admirable.

In the next passage, his imagination runs riot in the mischief he is plotting, and breaks out into the wildness and impetuosity of real enthusiasm.

"Roderigo. Here is her father's house: I'll call aloud.
Iago. Do, with like timorous accent and dire yell,
As when, by night and negligence, the fire
Is spied in populous cities."

Of [illegible] most favorite topics, on which he is rich indeed, [illegible] in which his sphere serves him for a Muse, [illegible] passionate pair between Desdemona and the Moor. [illegible] character of the lady which he is by no means ready to part with. It is brought forward in the first [illegible] to prevent, in answer to his insinuations [illegible] Desdemona. Roderigo says,

[illegible]

[illegible] Othello's own [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

stances in which she is placed. The character indeed has always had the greatest charm for minds of the finest sensibility. For our own part, we are a little of Iago's council in this matter; and all circumstances considered, and platonics out of the question, if we were to cast the complexion of Desdemona physiognomically, we should say she had a very fair skin, and very light auburn hair, inclining to yellow. We at the same time give her credit for purity and delicacy of sentiment; but it so happens that purity and grossness sometimes

> "Nearly are allied,
> And thin partitions do their bounds divide."

Yet the reverse does not hold; so uncertain and undefinable a thing is moral character! It is no wonder that Iago had some contempt for it, "who knew all qualities of human dealings with a learned spirit." There is considerable gaiety and ease in his dialogue with Æmilia and Desdemona on their landing. It is then holiday time with him; but yet the general satire is biting, and his idea of human character is finely expressed in what he says to Desdemona when she asks him how he would praise her—

> "Oh, gentle lady, do not put me to it,
> For I am nothing if not critical."

The habitual licentiousness of Iago's conversation is not to be traced to the pleasure he takes in gross or lascivious images, but to his desire of finding out the worst side of everything, and of proving himself an over-match for appearances. He has none of "the milk of human kindness" in his composition. His imagination rejects everything that has not a strong infusion of the most unpalatable ingredients; his moral constitution digests only poisons. Virtue or goodness or whatever has the least "relish of salvation in it," is, to his depraved appetite, sickly and insipid: and he even resents the good opinion entertained of his own integrity, as if it were an affront cast on the masculine sense and spirit of his character. Thus, at the meeting between Othello and Desdemona, he exclaims—"Oh, you are well tuned now: but I'll set down the pegs that make this music, *as honest*

as Iago"—his character of *bonhomie* not sitting at all easily upon him. In the scenes with Othello, where he has to put his [illegible] of theoretical evil into practice, with great risk to himself, and with dreadful consequences to others, he is proportionably guarded, insidious, dark, and deliberate. Nothing ever came up to the profound dissimulation and dexterous artifice of the well-known dialogue in the third act, where he first enters upon the execution of his design.

[illegible]

[illegible] with her

[illegible]

[illegible] right in that

[illegible]

[illegible] at me

[illegible]

[illegible] treachery [illegible]

[illegible]

That liv'st to make thine honesty a vice!
O monstrous world! Take note, take note, O world,
To be direct and honest, is not safe.
I thank you for this profit; and from hence
I'll love no friend, since love breeds such offence."

If Iago is detestable enough when he has business on his hands and all his engines at work, he is still worse when he has nothing to do, and we only see into the hollowness of his heart. His indifference when Othello falls into a swoon, is perfectly diabolical, but quite in character.

"IAGO. How is it, General? Have you not hurt your head?
OTHELLO. Dost thou mock me?
IAGO. I mock you not, by Heaven," &c.

The part indeed would hardly be tolerated, even as a foil to the virtue and generosity of the other characters in the play, but for its indefatigable industry and inexhaustible resources, which divert the attention of the spectator (as well as his own) from the end he has in view to the means by which it must be accomplished. Edmund the Bastard in *Lear* is something of the same character, placed in less difficult circumstances. Zanga is a vulgar caricature of it.

TIMON OF ATHENS.

> "Follow his strides, his lobbies fill with tendance,
> Rain sacrificial whisperings in his ear;
> And through him drink the free air"—

more striking than that of the sudden falling off of his friends and fortune, and his naked exposure in a wild forest digging roots from the earth for his sustenance, with a lofty spirit of self-denial, and bitter scorn of the world, which raise him higher in our esteem than the dazzling gloss of prosperity could do. He grudges himself the means of life, and is only busy in preparing his grave. How forcibly is the difference between what he was, and what he is described in Apemantus's taunting questions, when he comes to reproach him with the change in his way of life!

> ——— "What, think'st thou
> That the bleak air, thy boisterous chamberlain,
> Will put thy shirt on warm? will these mossed trees
> That have out-liv'd the eagle, page thy heels,
> And skip where thou point'st out? will the cold brook,
> Candied with ice, caudle thy morning taste
> To cure thy o'er-night's surfeit? Call the creatures,
> Whose naked natures live in all the spight
> Of wreakful heav'n, whose bare unhoused trunks,
> To the conflicting elements expos'd,
> Answer mere nature, bid them flatter thee"

The manners are everywhere preserved with distinct truth. The poet and painter are very skilfully played off against one another, both affecting great attention to the other, and each taken up with his own vanity, and the superiority of his own art. Shakspeare has put into the mouth of the former a very lively description of the genius of poetry and of his own in particular.

> ——— "A thing slipt idly from me.
> Our poesy is as a gum, which issues
> From whence 'tis nourish'd. The fire i' the flint
> Shows not till it be struck: our gentle flame
> Provokes itself—and like the current flies
> Each bound it chafes."———

The hollow friendship and shuffling evasions of the Athenian lords, their smooth professions and pitiful ingratitude, are very satisfactorily exposed, as well as the different disguises to which the meanness of self-love resorts in such cases to hide a want of generosity and good faith. The lurking selfishness of Apemantus does not pass undetected amidst the grossness of his sarcasms and his contempt for the pretensions of others. Even the two courtezans who accompany Alcibiades to the cave of Timon are very characteristically sketched; and the thieves who come to visit him are also "true men" in their way.—An exception to this general picture of selfish depravity is found in the old and honest steward Flavius, to whom Timon pays a full tribute of tenderness. Shakespear was unwilling to draw a picture "*all over ugly with hypocrisy*." He owed this character to the good-natured solicitations of his Muse. His mind was well said by Ben Jonson to be the "sphere of humanity."

The moral sententiousness of this play equals that of Lord Bacon's Treatise on the Wisdom of the Ancients, and is indeed seasoned with greater variety. Every topic of contempt or indignation is here exhausted; but while the sordid licentiousness of Apemantus, which turns every thing to gall and bitterness, shews only the natural virulence of his temper and antipathy to [illegible]. Timon does not utter an imprecation without betraying the extravagant workings of disappointed passion, of [illegible]. Apemantus sees nothing good in any object, [illegible]: Timon is [illegible] between things and appearances; [illegible] and the rottenness within, [illegible] properties [illegible]. He is passionately [illegible].

[illegible]

Shew [illegible]

Would cast the gorge at, *this embalms and spiced*
To th' April day again."

One of his most dreadful imprecations is that which occurs immediately on his leaving Athens.

"Let me look back upon thee, O thou wall,
That girdlest in those wolves! Dive in the earth,
And fence not Athens! Matrons, turn incontinent;
Obedience fail in children; slaves and fools
Pluck the grave wrinkled senate from the bench,
And minister in their steads. To general filths
Convert o' th' instant green virginity!
Do't in your parents' eyes. Bankrupts, hold fast;
Rather than render back, out with your knives,
And cut your trusters' throats! Bound servants, steal:
Large-handed robbers your grave masters are,
And pill by law. Maid, to thy master's bed:
Thy mistress is o' th' brothel. Son of sixteen,
Pluck the lin'd crutch from thy old limping sire,
And with it beat his brains out! Fear and piety,
Religion to the Gods, peace, justice, truth,
Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighborhood,
Instructions, manners, mysteries and trades,
Degrees, observances, customs, and laws,
Decline to your confounding contraries;
And let confusion live!—Plagues incident to men,
Your potent and infectious fevers heap
On Athens, ripe for stroke! Thou cold sciatica,
Cripple our senators, that their limbs may halt
As lamely as their manners! Lust and liberty
Creep in the minds and manners of our youth,
That 'gainst the stream of virtue they may strive,
And drown themselves in riot! Itches, blains,
Sow all th' Athenian bosoms; and their crop
Be general leprosy: breath infect breath,
That their society (as their friendship) may
Be merely poison!"

Timon here is just as ideal in his passion for ill as he had before been in his belief of good. Apemantus was satisfied with the mischief existing in the world, and with his own ill-nature One of the most decisive intimations of Timon's morbid jealousy of appearances is in his answer to Apemantus, who asks him,

"What things in the world canst thou nearest compare with thy flatterers?

TIMON. Women nearest; but men, men are the things themselves."

Apemantus, it is said, "loved few things better than to abhor himself." This is not the case with Timon, who neither loves to abhor himself nor others. All his vehement misanthropy is a work of uphill work. From the slippery turns of fortune, from the turmoils of passion and adversity, he wishes to sink into the quiet of the grave. On that subject his thoughts are intent, on that he finds time and place to grow romantic. He digs his own grave by the sea-shore; contrives his funeral ceremonies amidst the pomp of desolation, and builds his mausoleum of the elements.

> "[illegible] Athens,
> [illegible]
> [illegible],
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> And let my gravestone be your oracle."

And again, Alcibiades, after reading his epitaph, says of him,

> "[illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible] which
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> O [illegible]

[illegible] his funeral direct[illegible] marble, and [illegible] in the everlasting solemnities of nature, [illegible] of the transitory splendour of this world.

CORIOLANUS.

SHAKSPEARE has in this play shown himself well versed in history and state-affairs. CORIOLANUS is a store-house of political commonplaces. Any one who studies it may save himself the trouble of reading Burke's Reflections, or Paine's Rights of Man, or the Debates in both Houses of Parliament since the French Revolution or our own. The arguments for and against aristocracy or democracy, on the privileges of the few and the claims of the many, on liberty and slavery, power and the abuse of it, peace and war, are here very ably handled, with the spirit of a poet and the acuteness of a philosopher. Shakspeare himself seems to have had a leaning to the arbitrary side of the question, perhaps from some feeling of contempt for his own origin; and to have spared no occasion of baiting the rabble. What he says of them is very true: what he says of their betters is also very true, though he dwells less upon it. The cause of the people is indeed but ill calculated as a subject for poetry; it admits of rhetoric, which goes into argument and explanation, but it presents no immediate or distinct images to the mind, "no jutting frieze, buttress, or coigne of vantage" for poetry "to make its pendant and procreant cradle in." The language of poetry naturally falls in with the language of power. The imagination is an exaggerating and exclusive faculty; it takes from one thing to add to another: it accumulates circumstances together to give the greatest possible effect to a favorite object. The understanding is a dividing and measuring faculty: it judges of things, not according to their immediate impression on the mind, but according to their relations to one another. The one is a monopolizing faculty, which seeks the greatest quantity of pre-

stance, has more attraction than abstract right. Coriolanus complains of the fickleness of the people: yet the instant he cannot gratify his pride and obstinacy at their expense, he turns his arms against his country. If his country was not worth defending, why did he build his pride on its defence? He is a conqueror and a hero; he conquers other countries, and makes this a plea for enslaving his own; and when he is prevented from doing so, he leagues with its enemies to destroy his country. He rates the people "as if he were a God to punish, and not a man of their infirmity." He scoffs at one of their tribunes for maintaining their rights and franchises: "Mark you his absolute *shall?*" not marking his own absolute *will* to take everything from them; his impatience of the slightest opposition to his own pretensions being in proportion to their arrogance and absurdity. If the great and powerful had the beneficence and wisdom of gods, then all this would have been well: if with greater knowledge of what is good for the people, they had as great a care for their interest as they have for their own, if they were seated above the world, sympathizing with the welfare, but not feeling the passions of men, receiving neither good nor hurt from them, but bestowing their benefits as free gifts on them, they might then rule over them like another Providence. But this is not the case. Coriolanus is unwilling that the senate should show their "cares" for the people, lest their "cares" should be construed into "fears," to the subversion of all due authority; and he is no sooner disappointed in his schemes to deprive the people not only of the cares of the state, but of all power to redress themselves, than Volumnia is made madly to exclaim,

> "Now the red pestilence strike all trades in Rome,
> And occupations perish."

This is but natural: it is but natural for a mother to have more regard for her son than for a whole city; but then the city should be left to take some care of itself. The care of the state cannot, we here see, be safely entrusted to maternal affection, or to the domestic charities of high life. The great have private feelings of their own, to which the interests of humanity

Though you were born in Rome; his bloody brow
With his mail'd hand then wiping, forth he goes
Like to a harvest man, that's task'd to mow
Or all, or lose his hire.
VIRGILIA. His bloody brow! Oh Jupiter, no blood.
VOLUMNIA. Away, you fool; it more becomes a man
Than gilt his trophy. The breast of Hecuba,
When she did suckle Hector, look'd not lovelier
Than Hector's forehead, when it spit forth blood
At Grecian swords contending."

When she hears the trumpets that proclaim her son's return, she says in the true spirit of a Roman matron,

"These are the ushers of Martius: before him
He carries noise, and behind him he leaves tears.
Death, that dark spirit, in 's nervy arm doth lie,
Which being advanc'd, declines, and then men die."

Coriolanus himself is a complete character: his love of reputation, his contempt of popular opinion, his pride and modesty, are consequences of each other. His pride consists in the inflexible sternness of his will: his love of glory is a determined desire to bear down all opposition, and to extort the admiration both of friends and foes. His contempt for popular favor, his unwillingness to hear his own praises, spring from the same source. He cannot contradict the praises that are bestowed upon him; therefore he is impatient at hearing them. He would enforce the good opinion of others by his actions, but does not want their acknowledgments in words.

"Pray now, no more: my mother,
Who has a charter to extol her blood,
When she does praise me, grieves me."

His magnanimity is of the same kind. He admires in an enemy that courage which he honors in himself: he places himself on the hearth of Aufidius with the same confidence that he would have met him in the field, and feels that by putting himself in his power, he takes from him all temptation for using it against him.

In the title-page of CORIOLANUS, it is said that the play is "of the Dramatis Personæ." The whole history exactly [illegible] and many of the principal speeches copied from the life of Coriolanus in Plutarch." It will be interesting to see how far this is the case. Two of the principal scenes, those between the Romans and Aufidius and between Coriolanus and his mother, are thus given in Sir Thomas North's translation of Plutarch, dedicated to Queen Elizabeth, 1579. The first is as follows:

[illegible]

weary to live any longer. And it were no wisdom in thee to save the life of him who hath been heretofore thy mortal enemy, and whose service now can nothing help, nor pleasure thee.' Tullus hearing what he said, was a marvellous glad man, and taking him by the hand, he said unto him: 'Stand up, O Martius, and be of good cheer, for in proffering thyself unto us, thou doest us great honor: and by this means thou mayest hope also of greater things at all the Volsces' hands.' So he feasted him for that time, and entertained him in the honorablest manner he could, talking with him of no other matter at that present: but within few days after, they fell to consultation together in what sort they should begin their wars."

The meeting between Coriolanus and his mother is also nearly the same as in the play.

"Now was Martius set there in the chair of state, with all the honors o a general, and when he spied the women coming afar off, he marvelled what the matter meant: but afterwards knowing his wife which came foremost, he determined at the first to persist in his obstinate and inflexible rancor. But overcome in the end with natural affection, and being altogether altered to see them, his heart would not serve him to tarry their coming to his chair, but coming down in haste, he went to meet them, and first he kissed his mother, and embraced her a pretty while, then his wife and little children. And nature so wrought with him, that the tears fell from his eyes, and he could not keep himself from making much of them but yielded to the affection of his blood, as if he had been violently carried with the fury of a most swift-running stream. After he had thus lovingly received them, and perceiving that his mother Volumnia would begin to speak to him, he called the chiefest of the council of the Volsces to hear what she would say. Then she spake in this sort: 'If we held our peace, my son, and determined not to speak, the state of our poor bodies, and present sight of our raiment, would easily betray to thee what life we have led at home, since thy exile and abode abroad; but think now with thyself, how much more unfortunate than all the women living, we are come hither, considering that the sight which should be most pleasant to all others to behold, spiteful fortune had made most fearful to us: making myself to see my son, and my daughter here her husband, besieging the walls of his native country: so as that which is the only comfort to all others, in their adversity and misery, to pray unto the Gods, and to call to them for aid, is the only thing which plungeth us into most deep perplexity. For we cannot, alas, together pray, both for victory to our country, and for safety of thy life also: but a world of grievous curses, yea, more than any mortal enemy can heap upon us, are forcibly wrapped up in our prayers. For the bitter sop of most hard choice is offered thy wife and children, to forego one of the two: either to lose the person of thyself, or the nurse of their native country. For myself, my son, I am determined not to tarry till fortune in

and lifted her up, crying out, 'Oh mother, what have you done to me?' And holding her hard by the right hand, 'Oh mother,' said he, 'you have won a happy victory for your country, but mortal and unhappy for your son: for I see myself vanquished by you alone.' These words being spoken openly, he spake a little apart with his mother and wife, and then let them return again to Rome, for so they did request him; and so remaining in the camp that night, the next morning he dislodged, and marched homeward unto the Volsces' country again."

Shakspeare has, in giving a dramatic form to this passage, adhered very closely and properly to the text. He did not think it necessary to improve upon the truth of nature. Several of the scenes in *Julius Cæsar*, particularly Portia's appeal to the confidence of her husband by showing him the wound she had given herself, and the appearance of the ghost of Cæsar to Brutus, are, in like manner, taken from the history.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

This is one of the most loose and desultory of our author's [illegible] just as it happens, but it overtakes, together with a number of insignificant matters, a prodigious number of fine things [illegible]. Troilus himself is no character: he is merely a [illegible] Cressida and her uncle Pandarus are [illegible] Both the speeches given to the leaders of the Greek host, Nestor, Ulysses, Agamemnon, Achilles, Ajax, [illegible] are well-known theorems as well as if he had been a [illegible] into the enemy's camp—to say nothing [illegible] examples of didactic eloquence. The [illegible]

"[illegible] love," &c.

[illegible]

[illegible] Shakespeare, it would [illegible] that [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

sometimes giving an entire extract from the unacted plays of our author may with one class of readers have almost the use of restoring a lost passage: and may serve to convince another class of critics, that the poet's genius was not confined to the production of stage effect by preternatural means.

"Ulysses. Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back,
Wherein he puts alms for Oblivion;
A great-siz'd monster of ingratitudes:
Those scraps are good deeds past,
Which are devour'd as fast as they are made,
Forgot as soon as done: Persev'rance, dear my lord,
Keeps Honor bright: to have done, is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
In monumental mockery. Take the instant way;
For Honor travels in a strait so narrow,
Where one but goes abreast; keep then the path
For Emulation hath a thousand sons,
That one by one pursue; if you give way,
Or hedge aside from the direct forth-right,
Like to an entered tide, they all rush by,
And leave you hindmost;———
Or, like a gallant horse fall'n in first rank,
O'er-run and trampled on: then what do they in present
Tho' less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours;
For time is like a fashionable host,
That slightly shakes his parting guest by th' hand,
And with his arms out-stretched, as he would fly,
Grasps in the comer: the Welcome ever smiles,
And Farewell goes out sighing. O, let not virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was; for beauty, wit,
High birth, vigor of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating time:
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.
That all, with one consent, praise new-born gauds,
Tho' they are made and moulded of things past.
The present eye praises the present object.
Then marvel not, thou great and complete man,
That all the Greeks begin to worship Ajax;
Since things in motion sooner catch the eye,
Than what not stirs. The cry went out on thee,
And still it might, and yet it may again,
If thou would'st not entomb thyself alive,
And case thy reputation in thy tent."

The throng of images in the above lines is prodigious; and though they sometimes justle against one another, they every where [illegible] and carry on the feeling, which is metaphysically true and [illegible]. The [illegible] between the Trojan chiefs on the [illegible] of Helen are full of knowledge of human motives and character. Troilus enters well into the philosophy of war, when he says, in answer to something that falls from Hector —

[illegible]

to him, and I warrant Helen, to change, would give money to boot." This is the language he addresses to his niece: nor is she much behind-hand in coming into the plot. Her head is as light and fluttering as her heart. "It is the prettiest villain, she fetches her breath so short as a new-ta'en-sparrow." Both characters are originals, and quite different from what they are in Chaucer. In Chaucer, Cressida is represented as a grave, sober, considerate personage (a widow—he cannot tell her age, nor whether she has children or no), who has an alternate eye to her character, her interest, and her pleasure. Shakspeare's Cressida is a giddy girl, an unpractised jilt, who falls in love with Troilus, as she afterwards deserts him, from mere levity and thoughtlessness of temper. She may be wooed and won to anything and from anything, at a moment's warning: the other knows very well what she would be at, and sticks to it, and is more governed by substantial reasons than by caprice or vanity. Pandarus again, in Chaucer's story, is a friendly sort of go-between, tolerably busy, officious, and forward in bringing matters to bear; but in Shakspeare he has "a stamp exclusive and professional:" he wears the badge of his trade; he is a regular knight of the game. The difference of the manner in which the subject is treated arises perhaps less from intention, than from the different genius of the two poets. There is no *double entendre* in the characters of Chaucer: they are either quite serious or quite comic. In Shakspeare the ludicrous and ironical are constantly blended with the stately and the impassioned. We see Chaucer's characters as they saw themselves, not as they appeared to others or might have appeared to the poet. He is as deeply implicated in the affairs of his personages as they could be themselves. He had to go a long journey with each of them, and became a kind of necessary confidant. There is little relief, or light and shade, in his pictures. The conscious smile is not seen lurking under the brow of grief or impatience. Everything with him is intense and continuous—a working out of what went before. Shakspeare never committed himself to his characters. He trifled, laughed, or wept with them as he chose. He has no prejudices for or against them; and it seems a matter of perfect indifference whether he shall be in jest or

earnest. According to him, "the web of our lives is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together." His genius was dramatic, as Chaucer's was universal. He saw both sides of a question, the dramatic way is taken of it according to the different interests of the parties concerned, and he was at once an actor and spectator on the scene. If anything, he is too various and flexible; too full of transitions, of glancing lights, of salient points. If Chaucer followed up his subject too doggedly, perhaps Shakspeare was too capricious and heedless. The Muse's wing too often lifted him off his feet. He made infinite excursions to the right and the left.

[illegible]

Chaucer's method is lethargic to the reader's impatience, that is, to the [illegible] Shakspeare's is oppressive to the mind in given circumstances. Shakspeare outstrips the progress and the faculties of the reader. He [illegible] Chaucer never [illegible] Shakspeare's [illegible] Chaucer's [illegible] Shakspeare [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

tion than Chaucer, but he wanted resources of invention to lay open the stores of nature or the human heart with the same radiant light that Shakspeare has done. However fine or profound the thought, we know what was coming, whereas the effect of reading Shakspeare is "like the eye of vassalage encountering majesty." Chaucer's mind was consecutive, rather than discursive. He arrived at truth through a certain process; Shakspeare saw everything by intuition. Chaucer had great variety of power, but he could do only one thing at once. He set himself to work on a particular subject. His ideas were kept separate, labelled, ticketed and parcelled out in a set form, in pews and compartments by themselves. They did not play into one another's hands. They did not re-act upon one another, as the blower's breath moulds the yielding glass. There is something hard and dry in them. What is the most wonderful thing in Shakspeare's faculties is their excessive sociability, and how they gossiped and compared notes together.

We must conclude this criticism; and we will do it with a quotation or two. One of the most beautiful passages in Chaucer's tale is the description of Cresseide's first avowal of her love.

> "And as the new abashed nightingale,
> That stinteth first when she beginneth sing,
> When that she heareth any herdé's tale,
> Or in the hedges any wight stirring,
> And, after, sicker doth her voice outring;
> Right so Cresseide, when that her dread stent,
> Opened her heart, and told him her intent."

See also the two next stanzas, and particularly that divine one beginning

> "Her armés small, her back both straight and soft," &c

Compare this with the following speech of Troilus to Cressida in the play.

> "O, that I thought it could be in a woman;
> And if it can, I will presume in you,

To feed for aye her lamp and flames of love,
To keep her constancy in plight and youth,
Outliving beauties outward, with a mind
That doth renew swifter than blood decays.
Or, that persuasion could but thus convince me,
That my integrity and truth to you
Might be affronted with the match and weight
Of such a winnow'd purity in love;
How were I then uplifted! but alas,
I am as true as truth's simplicity,
And simpler than the infancy of truth."

These passages may not seem very characteristic at first sight, though we think they are so. We will give two, that cannot be mistaken. Patroclus says to Achilles,

"—— Rouse yourself; and the weak wanton Cupid
Shall from your neck unloose his amorous fold,
And, like a dew-drop from the lion's mane
Be shook to air."

Troilus, addressing the god of day on the approach of the morning that parts him from Cressida, says with much scorn,

"What! proffer'st thou thy light here for to sell?
Go, sell it them that smallé seles grave."

If nobody but Shakespeare could have written the former, nobody but Chaucer would have thought of the latter. Chaucer was the most literal of poets, as Richardson was of prose writers.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

This is a very [illegible]

My play-fellow, your hand; this kingly seal,
And plighter of high hearts."

It is no wonder that he orders him to be whipped; but his low condition is not the true reason: there is another feeling which lies deeper, though Antony's pride would not let him show it, except by his rage; he suspects the fellow to be Cæsar's proxy.

Cleopatra's whole character is the triumph of the voluptuous, of the love of pleasure and the power of giving it, over every other consideration. Octavia is a dull foil to her, and Fulvia, a shrill-tongued shrew. What a picture do those lines give of her—

"Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety. Other women cloy
The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies."

What a spirit and fire in her conversation with Antony's messenger, who brings her the unwelcome news of his marriage with Octavia! How all the pride and beauty of high rank breaks out in her promised reward to him—

——— "There's gold, and here
My bluest veins to kiss!"

She had great and unpardonable faults, but the beauty of her death almost redeems them. She learns from the depth of despair the strength of her affections. She keeps her queen-like state in the last disgrace, and her sense of the pleasurable in the last moments of her life. She tastes a luxury in death. After applying the asp, she says with fondness—

"Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
That sucks the nurse asleep?
As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle.
Oh Antony!"

It is worth while to observe that Shakspeare has contrasted the extreme magnificence of the descriptions in this play with pictures of extreme suffering and physical horror, not less strik-

ing—partly, perhaps, to excuse the effeminacy of Mark Antony, to whom they are related as having happened, but more to preserve a certain balance of feeling in the mind. Caesar says, hearing of his conduct at the court of Cleopatra,

> ——— Antony,
> Leave thy lascivious wassels. When thou once
> Wast beaten from Modena, where thou slew'st
> Hirtius and Pansa, consuls, at thy heel
> Did famine follow, whom thou fought'st against,
> Though daintily brought up, with patience more
> Than savages could suffer. Thou did'st drink
> The stale of horses, and the gilded puddle
> Which beasts would cough at. Thy palate then did deign
> [illegible]

[illegible] Antony's defeat by Augustus, where he is [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

The [illegible] Antony [illegible] Cleopatra [illegible] the

changes of accident and passion. Success and defeat follow one another with startling rapidity. Fortune sits upon her wheel more blind and giddy than usual. This precarious state and the approaching dissolution of his greatness are strikingly displayed in the dialogue between Antony and Eros.

"ANTONY. Eros, thou yet behold'st me?
EROS. Ay, noble lord.
ANTONY. Sometime we see a cloud that's dragonish,
A vapor sometime, like a bear or lion,
A towered citadel, a pendant rock,
A forked mountain, or blue promontory
With trees upon 't, that nod unto the world
And mock our eyes with air. Thou hast seen these signs,
They are black vesper's pageants.
EROS. Ay, my lord.
ANTONY. That which is now a horse, even with a thought
The rack dislimns, and makes it indistinct
As water is in water.
EROS. It does, my lord.
ANTONY. My good knave, Eros, now thy captain is
Even such a body," &c.

This is, without doubt, one of the finest pieces of poetry in Shakspeare. The splendor of the imagery, the semblance of reality, the lofty range of picturesque objects hanging over the world, their evanescent nature, the total uncertainty of what is left behind, are just like the mouldering schemes of human greatness. It is finer than Cleopatra's passionate lamentation over his fallen grandeur, because it is more dim, unstable, unsubstantial. Antony's headstrong presumption, and infatuated determination to yield to Cleopatra's wishes to fight by sea instead of land, meet a merited punishment; and the extravagance of his resolutions, increasing with the desperateness of his circumstances, is well commented upon by Œnobarbus.

——"I see men's judgments are
A parcel of their fortunes, and things outward
Do draw the inward quality after them
To suffer all alike."

The repentance of Œnobarbus after his treachery to his mas-

ter is the most affecting part of the play. He cannot recover from the blow which Antony's generosity gives him, and he dies broken-hearted, "a master-leaver and a fugitive."

Shakspeare's genius has spread over the whole play a richness like the overflowing of the Nile.

HAMLET.

This is that Hamlet the Dane, whom we read of in our youth, and whom we seem almost to remember in our after-years; he who made that famous soliloquy on life, who gave the advice to the players, who thought "this goodly frame, the earth, a steril promontory, and this brave o'er-hanging firmament, the air, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors;" whom "man delighted not, nor woman neither;" he who talked with the grave-diggers, and moralised on Yorick's skull; the school-fellow of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern at Wittenberg; the friend of Horatio; the lover of Ophelia; he that was mad and sent to England; the slow avenger of his father's death; who lived at the court of Horwendillus five hundred years before we were born, but all whose thoughts we seem to know as well as we do our own, because we have read them in Shakspeare.

Hamlet is a name: his speeches and sayings but the idle coinage of the poet's brain. What then, are they not real? They are as real as our own thoughts. Their reality is in the reader's mind. It is *we* who are Hamlet. This play has a prophetic truth, which is above that of history. Whoever has become thoughtful and melancholy through his own mishaps or those of others; whoever has borne about with him the clouded brow of reflection, and thought himself "too much i' th' sun;" whoever has seen the golden lamp of day dimmed by envious mists rising in his own breast, and could find in the world before him only a dull blank with nothing left remarkable in it; whoever has known "the pangs of despised love, the insolence of office, or the spurns which patient merit of the unworthy

takes;" he who has felt his mind sink within him, and sadness cling to his heart like a malady, who has had his hopes blighted and his youth staggered by the apparitions of strange things; who cannot be well at ease, while he sees evil hovering near him like a spectre; whose powers of action have been eaten up by thought; he to whom the universe seems infinite, and himself nothing; whose bitterness of soul makes him careless of consequences, and who goes to a play as his best resource to drive off, to a second remove, the evils of life by a mock representation of them—this is the true Hamlet.

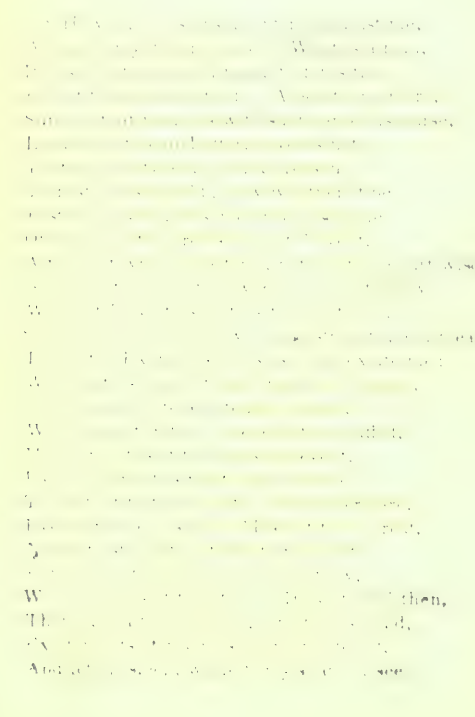
We have been so used to this tragedy that we hardly know how to criticise it any more than we should know how to describe our own faces. But we must make such observations as we can. It is the one of Shakspeare's plays that we think of the oftenest, because it abounds most in striking reflections on human life, and because the distresses of Hamlet are transferred, by the turn of his mind, to the general account of humanity. Whatever happens to him we apply to ourselves, because he applies it so himself as a means of general reasoning. He is a great moraliser; and what makes him worth attending to is, that he moralises on his own feelings and experience. He is not a common-place pedant. If *Lear* shows the greatest depth of passion, Hamlet is the most remarkable for the ingenuity, originality, and unstudied development of character. Shakspeare had more magnanimity of genius than any other poet, and he has shown more of it in this play than in any other. There is no attempt to force an interest: every thing is left for time and circumstances to unfold. The attention is excited without effort, the incidents succeed each other as matters of course, the characters think and speak and act just as they might do, if left entirely to themselves. There is no set purpose, no straining at a point. The observations are suggested by the passing scene—the gusts of passion come and go like sounds of music borne on the wind. The whole play is an exact transcript of what might be supposed to have taken place at the court of Denmark, at the remote period of time fixed upon, before the modern refinements in morals and manners were heard of. It would have been interesting enough to have

been admitted as a bystander in such a scene, at such a time, to have heard and seen something of what was going on. But here we are more than spectators. We have not only "the outward pageants and the signs of grief;" "but we have that within which passes show." We read the thoughts of the heart, we catch the passions living as they rise. Other dramatic writers give us very fine versions and paraphrases of nature: but Shakspeare, together with his own comments, gives us the original text, that we may judge for ourselves. Here, as in all his other works, the poet appears for the time being to be identified with each character he wishes to represent, and to pass from one to the other like the same soul, successively animating different bodies. By an art like that of the ventriloquist, he throws his imagination out of himself, and makes every word appear to proceed from the very mouth of the person whose name it bears. His plays alone are properly expressions of the passions, not descriptions of them. His characters are real beings of flesh and blood; they speak like men, not like authors. Each object and circumstance seems to exist in his mind as it existed in nature; each several train of thought and feeling goes on of itself without an effort or confusion; in the world of his imagination everything has a life, a place, and being of its own.

The character of Hamlet is itself a pure effusion of genius. It is not a character marked by strength of passion or will, but by refinement of thought and feeling. Hamlet is as little of the hero as a man can well be: but he is a young and princely novice, full of high enthusiasm and quick sensibility—the sport of circumstances, questioning with fortune, and refining on his own feelings, and forced from the natural bias of his character by the strangeness of his situation. He seems incapable of deliberate action, and is only hurried into extremities on the spur of the occasion, when he has no time to reflect, as in the scene where he kills Polonius, and again, where he alters the letters which Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are taking with them to England, purporting his death. At other times when he is most bound to act, he remains puzzled, undecided and sceptical, dallies with his purposes, till the occasion is lost, and always finds some pretence to relapse into indolence and thoughtfulness again.

For this reason he refuses to kill the King when he is at his prayers, and by a refinement in malice, which is in truth only an excuse for his own want of resolution, defers his revenge to some more fatal opportunity, when its object shall be engaged "in the act" that has no relish of salvation in it."

He is the prince of philosophical speculators, and because he cannot have his revenge perfect, according to the most refined ideas his wish can form, he misses it altogether. So he scruples to trust the suggestions of the Ghost, contrives the scene of the play to have surer proof of his uncle's guilt, and then rests satisfied with this confirmation of his suspicions, and the success of his experiment, instead of acting upon it. Yet he is sensible of his own weakness, taxes himself with it, and tries to reason himself out of it.



> The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
> That for a fantasy and trick of fame,
> Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
> Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
> Which is not tomb enough and continent
> To hide the slain?—O, from this time forth,
> My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth."

Still he does nothing: and this very speculation on his own infirmity only affords him another occasion for indulging it. It is not for any want of attachment to his father or abhorrence of his murder that Hamlet is thus dilatory, but it is more to his taste to indulge his imagination in reflecting upon the enormity of the crime and refining on his schemes of vengeance, than to put them into immediate practice. His ruling passion is to think, not to act: and any vague pretence that flatters this propensity instantly diverts him from his previous purposes.

The moral perfection of this character has been called in question by those, we think, who did not understand it. It is more natural than conformable to rules; and if not more amiable, is certainly more dramatic on that account. Hamlet is not, to be sure, a Sir Charles Grandison. In general the ethical delineations of "that noble and liberal casuist" (as Shakspeare has been well called) do not exhibit the drab-colored quakerism of morality. His plays are not copied either from The Whole Duty of Man, or from The Academy of Compliments! We confess, we are a little shocked at the want of refinement in those who are shocked at the want of refinement in Hamlet. The deficiency of punctilious exactness in his behavior either partakes of the "licence of the time," or belongs to the very excess of intellectual refinement in the character, which makes the common rules of life, as well as his own purposes, sit loose upon him. He may be said to be amenable only to the tribunal of his own thoughts, and is too much occupied with the airy world of contemplation to lay as much stress as he ought on the practical consequences of things. His habitual principles of action are unhinged and out of joint with the time. His conduct to Ophelia is quite natural in his circumstances. It is that of assumed severity only. It is the effect of disappointed hope, of bitter regrets, of affection suspended.

at one time and foolishly at another; that his advice to Laertes is very sensible, and his advice to the King and Queen on the subject of Hamlet's madness very ridiculous. But he gives the one as a father, and is sincere in it; he gives the other as a mere courtier, a busy-body, and is accordingly officious, garrulous, and impertinent. In short, Shakspeare has been accused of inconsistency in this and other characters, only because he has kept up the distinction which there is in nature, between the understandings and the moral habits of men, between the absurdity of their ideas and the absurdity of their motives. Polonius is not a fool, but he makes himself appear one. His folly, whether in his actions or speeches, comes under the head of impropriety of intention.

Hamlet is probably, of all other of Shakspeare's characters, the most difficult to personate on the stage. It is like the attempt to embody a shadow.

> "Come then, the colors and the ground prepare,
> Dip in the rainbow, trick her off in air!
> Chuse a firm cloud, before it falls, and in it
> Catch, ere she change, the Cynthia of a minute."

Such, nearly, is the task which the actor imposes on himself in the part of Hamlet. It is quite remote from hardness and dry precision. The character is spun to the finest thread, yet never loses its continuity. It has the yielding flexibility of a wave of the sea! It is made up of undulating lines, without a single sharp angle. There is no set purpose, no straining at a point. The observations are suggested by the passing scene—the gusts of passion come and go, like the sounds of music borne on the wind. The interest depends not on the action, but on the thoughts.

THE TEMPEST.

ance of it. Though he has here given "to airy nothing a local habitation and a name," yet that part which is only the fantastic creation of his mind, has the same palpable texture, and coheres "semblably" with the rest. As the preternatural part has the air of reality, and almost haunts the imagination with a sense of truth, the real characters and events partake of the wildness of a dream. The stately magician, Prospero, driven from his dukedom, but around whom (so potent is his art) airy spirits throng numberless to do his bidding; his daughter Miranda ("worthy of that name"), to whom all the power of his art points, and who seems the goddess of the isle; the princely Ferdinand, cast by fate upon the haven of his happiness; the delicate Ariel; the savage Caliban, half brute, half demon; the drunken ship's crew—are all connected parts of the story, and could not be spared from the place they fill. Even the local scenery is of a piece and character with the subject. Prospero's enchanted island seems to have risen up out of the sea; the airy music, the tempest-tost vessel, the turbulent waves, all have the effect of the landscape back-ground of some fine picture. Shakspeare's pencil is (to use an allusion of his own) "like the dyer's hand, subdued to what it works in." Everything in him, though it partakes "of the liberty of wit," is also subjected to "the law" of the understanding. For instance, even the drunken sailors share, in the disorder of their minds and bodies, in the tumult of the elements, and seem on shore to be as much at the mercy of chance as they were before at the mercy of the winds and waves. These fellows, with their sea-wit, are the least to our taste of any part of the play: but they are as like drunken sailors as they can be, and are an indirect foil to Caliban, whose figure acquires a classical dignity in the comparison.

The character of Caliban is generally thought (and justly so) to be one of the author's masterpieces. It is not indeed pleasant to see this character on the stage any more than it is to see the god Pan personated there. But in itself it is one of the wildest and most abstracted of all Shakspeare's characters; whose deformity, whether of body or mind, is redeemed by the power and truth of the imagination displayed in it. It is the

essence of grossness, but there is not a particle of vulgarity in it. Shakespeare has described the brutal mind of Caliban in contact with the pure and original forms of nature; the character grows out of the soil where it is rooted, uncontrolled, uncouth, and wild, uncramped by any of the meannesses of custom. It is "of the earth, earthy." It seems almost to have been dug out of the ground, with a soul instinctively superadded to it, answering to its wants and origin. Vulgarity is not natural coarseness, but conventional coarseness, learnt from others, contrary to, or without an entire conformity of natural power and disposition; as fashion is the common-place affectation of what is elegant and refined without any feeling of the essence of it. Schlegel, the admirable German critic on Shakespeare, observes that Caliban is a poetical character, and "always speaks in blank verse." He first comes in thus:—

[illegible]
… have cramps,
[illegible]
… me
[illegible]
… sty me
… from me
[illegible]

And again, he promises Trinculo his services thus, if he will free him from his drudgery.

> "I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries,
> I'll fish for thee, and get thee wood enough.
> I pr'ythee let me bring thee where crabs grow,
> And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts:
> Show thee a jay's nest, and instruct thee how
> To snare the nimble marmozet: I'll bring thee
> To clust'ring filberds; and sometimes I'll get thee
> Young scamels from the rock."

In conducting Stephano and Trinculo to Prospero's cell, Caliban shows the superiority of natural capacity over greater knowledge and greater folly; and in a former scene, when Ariel frightens them with his music, Caliban to encourage them accounts for it in the eloquent poetry of the senses.

> —"Be not afraid, the isle is full of noises,
> Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
> Sometimes a thousand twanging instruments
> Will hum about mine ears, and sometimes voices,
> That if I then had waked after long sleep,
> Would make me sleep again; and then in dreaming,
> The clouds methought would open, and show riches
> Ready to drop upon me: when I wak'd
> I cried to dream again."

This is not more beautiful than it is true. The poet here shows us the savage with the simplicity of a child, and makes the strange monster amiable. Shakspeare had to paint the human animal rude and without choice in its pleasures, but not without the sense of pleasure or some germ of the affections. Master Barnardine, in *Measure for Measure*, the savage of civilized life, is an admirable philosophical counterpart to Caliban.

Shakspeare has, as it were by design, drawn off from Caliban the elements of whatever is ethereal and refined, to compound them in the unearthly mould of Ariel. Nothing was ever more finely conceived than this contrast between the material and the spiritual, the gross and delicate. Ariel is imaginary power, the

swiftness of thought personified. When told to make good speed by Prospero, he says, "I drink the air before me." This is something like Puck's boast on a similar occasion, "I'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes." But Ariel differs from Puck in having a humane feeling in the results of those services employed about. How exceedingly fine the following dialogue between him and Prospero!

> "ARIEL. Your charge is set down.
> The strength of your will
> We
> Prosper
> Ariel. M
> I
> H
> C
> I
> And
> Ariel. I drink the air before me."

It is impossible to read that there is a peculiar charm in the words of Shakspeare, which, without conveying any distinct images, seem to recall all the feelings connected with [illegible]. Such is the music of Ariel's speeches, and the [illegible] to the [illegible] saying, [illegible] We [illegible] the melancholy air of many of [illegible]

"*Where* [illegible] *and hear us, your spirits are attending*

Ariel
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
Ariel [illegible]

The strain of strutting chanticleer
Cry cock-a-doodle-doo.

FERDINAND. Where should this music be? in air or earth?
It sounds no more: and sure it waits upon
Some god o' th' island. Sitting on a bank
Weeping against the king my father's wreck,
This music crept by me upon the waters,
Allaying both their fury and my passion
With its sweet air; thence I have follow'd it,
Or it hath drawn me rather:—but 'tis gone.—
No, it begins again.

ARIEL'S SONG.

Full fathom five thy father lies,
Of his bones are coral made:
Those are pearls that were his eyes,
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea change,
Into something rich and strange,
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell—
Hark! now I hear them, ding-dong bell.
[*Burden ding-dong.*

FERDINAND. The ditty does remember my drown'd father.
This is no mortal business, nor no sound
That the earth owns: I hear it now above me."

The courtship between Ferdinand and Miranda is one of the chief beauties of this play. It is the very purity of love. The pretended interference of Prospero with it heightens its interest, and is in character with the magician, whose sense of preternatural power makes him arbitrary, tetchy, and impatient of opposition.

The TEMPEST is a finer play than the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which has sometimes been compared with it; but it is not so fine a poem. There are a greater number of beautiful passages in the latter. Two of the most striking in the TEMPEST are spoken by Prospero. The one is that admirable one when the vision which he has conjured up disappears, beginning "The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces," &c., which has been so often quoted, that every school-boy knows it by heart: the other is that which Prospero makes in abjuring his art:

SEBASTIAN. And yet he would be king on 't.

ANTONIO. The latter end of his commonwealth forgets the beginning.

GONZALO. All things in common nature should produce
Without sweat or endeavor. Treason, felony,
Sword, pike, knife, gun or need of any engine
Would I not have; but nature should bring forth,
Of its own kind, all foizon, all abundance
To feed my innocent people!

SEBASTIAN. No marrying 'mong his subjects?

ANTONIO. None, man; all idle; whores and knaves

GONZALO. I would with such perfection govern, sir,
T' excel the golden age.

SEBASTIAN. Save his majesty!"

THE

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

—"You may do it extempore," says Quince, "for it is nothing but roaring." Starveling the Tailor keeps the peace, and objects to the lion and the drawn sword. "I believe we must leave the killing out when all's done." Starveling, however, does not start the objections himself, but seconds them when made by others, as if he had not spirit to express even his fears without encouragement. It is too much to suppose all this intentional: but it very luckily falls out so. Nature includes all that is implied in the most subtle analytical distinctions; and the same distinctions will be found in Shakspeare. Bottom, who is not only chief actor, but stage-manager for the occasion, has a device to obviate the danger of frightening the ladies: "Write me a prologue, and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords, and that Pyramus is not killed indeed; and for better assurance, tell them that I, Pyramus, am not Pyramus, but Bottom the Weaver: this will put them out of fear." Bottom seems to have understood the subject of dramatic illusion at least as well as any modern essayist. If our holiday mechanic rules the roast among his fellows, he is no less at home in his new character of an ass, "with amiable cheeks, and fair large ears." He instinctively acquires a most learned taste, and grows fastidious in the choice of dried peas and bottled hay. He is quite familiar with his new attendants, and assigns them their parts with all due gravity. "Monsieur Cobweb, good Monsieur, get your weapon in your hand, and kill me a red-hipt humble-bee on the top of a thistle, and, good Monsieur, bring me the honey-bag." What an exact knowledge is here shown of natural history!

Puck, or Robin Goodfellow, is the leader of the fairy band. He is the Ariel of the MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM; and yet as unlike as can be to the Ariel in *The Tempest*. No other poet could have made two such different characters out of the same fanciful materials and situations. Ariel is a minister of retribution, who is touched with a sense of pity at the woes he inflicts. Puck is a mad-cap sprite, full of wantonness and mischief, who laughs at those whom he misleads—"Lord, what fools these mortals be!" Ariel cleaves the air, and executes his mission with the zeal of a winged messenger; Puck is borne

The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
And for night tapers crop their waxen thighs,
And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
To have my love to bed, and to arise:
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies,
To fan the moon-beams from his sleeping eyes;
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies."

The sounds of the lute and of the trumpe are not more distinct than the poetry of the foregoing passage, and of the conversation between Theseus and Hippolita.

"THESEUS. Go, one of you, find out the forester,
For now our observation is perform'd;
And since we have the vaward of the day,
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
Uncouple in the western valley, go,
Dispatch, I say, and find the forester.
We will, fair Queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.
HIPPOLITA. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the boar
With hounds of Sparta; never did I hear
Such gallant chiding. For besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry. I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.
THESEUS. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd, so sanded, and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
Crook-knee'd and dew-lap'd, like Thessalian bulls,
Slow in pursuit, but matched in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tunable
Was never halloo'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly:
Judge when you hear."

Even Titian never made a hunting-piece of a *gusto* so fresh and lusty, and so near the first ages of the world as this.

It had been suggested to us that the MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM would do admirably to get up as a Christmas after-piece; and our prompter proposed that Mr. Kean should play the part of Bottom, as worthy of his great talents. He might, in the dis-

charge of his duty, offer to play the lady like any of our actresses that he pleased, the lover or the tyrant like any of our actors that he pleased, and the lion like "the most fearful wild-fowl living." The carpenter, the tailor, and joiner, it was thought, would hit the galleries. The young ladies in love would interest the side-boxes; and Robin Goodfellow and his companions excite a lively fellow-feeling in the children from school. There would be two courts, an empire within an empire, the Athenian and the Fairy King and Queen, with their attendants, and with all their finery. What an opportunity for processions, for the sound of trumpets and glittering of spears! What a [illegible] [illegible] them!

[illegible] and has failed; not [illegible] Mr. Kemble [illegible] not play the part of [illegible] The Midsummer Night's Dream, [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] are not

incredible, but fairies six feet high are so. Monsters are not shocking if they are seen at a proper distance. When ghosts appear at mid-day, when apparitions stalk along Cheapside, then may the MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM be represented without injury at Covent Garden or at Drury Lane. The boards of a theatre and the regions of fancy are not the same thing.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

esteem for one another, who have had no experience of the good or ills of life, and whose raptures or despair must be therefore equally groundless and fantastical. Whoever objects to the youth of the parties in this play as "too unripe and crude" to pluck the sweets of love, and wishes to see a first-love carried on into a good old age, and the passions taken at the rebound, when their force is spent, may find all this done in the *Stranger* and in other German plays, where they do things by contraries, and transpose nature to inspire sentiment and create philosophy. Shakspeare proceeded in a more straightforward, and, we think, more effectual way. He did not endeavor to extract beauty from wrinkles, or the wild throb of passion from the last expiring sigh of indifference. He did not "gather grapes of thorns nor figs of thistles." It was not his way. But he has given a picture of human life, such as it is in the order of nature. He has founded the passion of the two lovers not on the pleasures they had experienced, but on all the pleasures they had *not* experienced. All that was to come of life was theirs. At that untried source of promised happiness they slaked their thirst, and the first eager draught made them drunk with love and joy. They were in full possession of their senses and their affections. Their hopes were of air, their desires of fire. Youth is the season of love, because the heart is then first melted in tenderness from the touch of novelty, and kindled to rapture, for it knows no end of its enjoyments or its wishes. Desire has no limit but itself. Passion, the love and expectation of pleasure, is infinite, extravagant, inexhaustible, till experience comes to check and kill it. Juliet exclaims on her first interview with Romeo—

> "My bounty is as boundless as the sea,
> My love as deep."

And why should it not? What was to hinder the thrilling tide of pleasure, which had just gushed from her heart, from flowing on without stint or measure, but experience which she was yet without? What was to abate the transport of the first sweet sense of pleasure, which her heart and her senses had just tasted, but indifference, which she was yet a stranger to? What was there to check the ardor of hope, of faith, of constancy, just

rising in her breast, for disappointment which she had not yet felt." As are the desires and hopes of youthful passion, such is the keenness of its disappointments, and their baleful effect. Such is the transition in this play from the highest bliss to the lowest despair, from the nuptial couch to an untimely grave. The only evil that even in apprehension befalls the two lovers is the loss of the greatest possible felicity; yet this loss is fatal to both, for they had rather part with life than bear the thought of surviving all that had made life dear to them. In all this, Shakspeare has but followed nature, which existed in his time, as well as now. The modern philosophy, which reduces the whole theory of the mind to habitual impressions, and leaves the natural impulses of passion and imagination out of the account, had not then been discovered; or if it had, would have been little calculated for the uses of poetry.

It is the inverse of the same false system of philosophy to account for the strength of our earliest attachments, which has led Mr. Wordsworth to indulge in the mystical visions of Platonism in his Ode on the Progress of Life. He has very admirably described the vividness of our impressions in youth and childhood, and how 'they fade by degrees into the light of common day,' and he ascribes the change to the supposition of a pre-existent state, as if our early thoughts were nearer heaven, reflections of former trails of glory, shadows of our past being. This is idle. It is not from the knowledge of the past that the first impressions of things derive their gloss and splendour, but from our ignorance of the future, which fills the void to come with the warmth of our desires, with our gayest hopes, and brightest fancies. It is the obscurity spread before it that colours the prospect of life with hope, as it is the cloud which reflects the rainbow. There is no occasion to resort to any mystical union and transmission of feeling through different states of being to account for the romantic enthusiasm of youth; nor to plant the root of hope in the grave, nor to derive it from the skies. Its root is in the heart of man: it lifts its head above the stars. Desire and imagination are inmates of the human breast. The heaven 'that lies about us in our infancy' is only a new world, of which we know nothing but what we wish it to be,

and believe it all that we wish. In youth and boyhood, the world we live in is the world of desire, and of fancy: it is experience that brings us down to the world of reality. What is it that in youth sheds a dewey light round the evening star? That makes the daisy look so bright? That perfumes the hyacinth? That embalms the first kiss of love? It is the delight of novelty, and the seeing no end to the pleasure that we fondly believe is still in store for us. The heart revels in the luxury of its own thoughts, and is unable to sustain the weight of hope and love that presses upon it.—The effects of the passion of love alone might have dissipated Mr. Wordsworth's theory, if he means anything more by it than an ingenious and poetical allegory. *That* at least is not a link in the chain let down from other worlds; "the purple light of love" is not a dim reflection of the smiles of celestial bliss. It does not appear till the middle of life, and then seems like "another morn risen on mid day." In this respect the soul comes into the world in utter nakedness. Love waits for the ripening of the youthful blood. The sense of pleasure precedes the love of pleasure, but with the sense of pleasure, as soon as it is felt, come thronging infinite desires and hopes of pleasure, and love is mature as soon as born. It withers and it dies almost as soon!

This play presents a beautiful *coup d'œil* of the progress of human life. In thought it occupies years, and embraces the circle of the affections from childhood to old age. Juliet has become a great girl, a young woman, since we first remember her a little thing in the idle prattle of the nurse. Lady Capulet was about her age when she became a mother, and old Capulet somewhat impatiently tells his younger visitors,

> ——"I've seen the day
> That I have worn a visor, and could tell
> A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear,
> Such as would please: 'tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone"

Thus one period of life makes way for the following, and one generation pushes another off the stage. One of the most striking passages to show the intense feeling of youth in this play is Capulet's invitation to Paris to visit his entertainment.

"At my poor house, look to behold this night
Earth-treading stars that make dark heaven light:
Such comfort as do lusty young men feel
When well-apparell'd April on the heel
Of limping winter treads, even such delight
Among fresh female buds shall you this night
Inherit at my house."

The feelings of youth and of the spring are here blended together like the breath of opening flowers. Images of vernal beauty appear to have floated before the author's mind in writing this passage in profusion. Here is another of exquisite beauty, though suggested more by accident than by necessity. Montague [illegible] with a hopeless passion, which he will not [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] passionate beauty as when Romeo [illegible] with words of his [illegible] Benvolio enjoy, in the presence [illegible] Romeo first sees her at her father's [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] well-known scene [illegible] the delicacy of

Shakspeare's conception of the female character. It is wonderful how Collins, who was a critic and a poet of great sensibility should have encouraged the common error on this subject by saying—"But stronger Shakspeare felt for man alone."

The passage we mean is Juliet's apology for her maiden boldness.

> "Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face;
> Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek
> For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night.
> Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny
> What I have spoke—but farewell compliment:
> Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say, ay,
> And I will take thee at thy word—Yet if thou swear'st,
> Thou may'st prove false; at lovers' perjuries,
> They say Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,
> If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully;
> Or if thou think I am too quickly won
> I'll frown and be perverse, and say thee nay,
> So thou wilt woo: but else not for the world.
> In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond;
> And therefore thou may'st think my 'havior light;
> But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
> Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
> I should have been more strange, I must confess,
> But that thou over-heard'st, ere I was ware,
> My true love's passion; therefore pardon me,
> And not impute this yielding to light love,
> Which the dark night hath so discovered."

In this and all the rest her heart, fluttering between pleasure, hope, and fear, seems to have dictated to her tongue, and "calls true love spoken, simple modesty." Of the same sort, but bolder in virgin innocence, is her soliloquy after her marriage with Romeo.

> "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
> Towards Phœbus' mansion; such a waggoner
> As Phaeton would whip you to the west,
> And bring in cloudy night immediately.
> Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night;
> That run-aways' eyes may wink; and Romeo
> Leap to these arms, untalk'd of, and unseen!—
> Lovers can see to do their amorous rites

bling haste and airy grace, borne upon the thoughts of love, does the Friar's exclamation give of her, as she approaches his cell to be married—

> "Here comes the lady. Oh, so light a foot
> Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint:
> A lover may bestride the gossamer,
> That idles in the wanton summer air,
> And yet not fall, so light is vanity."

The tragic part of this character is of a piece with the rest. It is the heroic founded on tenderness and delicacy. Of this kind are her resolution to follow the Friar's advice, and the conflict in her bosom between apprehension and love when she comes to take the sleeping poison. Shakspeare is blamed for the mixture of low characters. If this is a deformity, it is the source of a thousand beauties. One instance is the contrast between the guileless simplicity of Juliet's attachment to her first love, and the convenient policy of the nurse in advising her to marry Paris, which excites such indignation in her mistress. "Ancient damnation! oh most wicked fiend," &c.

Romeo is Hamlet in love. There is the same rich exuberance of passion and sentiment in the one, that there is of thought and sentiment in the other. Both are absent and self-involved, both live out of themselves in a world of imagination. Hamlet is abstracted from everything; Romeo is abstracted from everything but his love, and lost in it. His "frail thoughts dally with faint surmise," and are fashioned out of the suggestions of hope, "the flatteries of sleep." He is himself only in his Juliet; she is his only reality, his heart's true home and idol. The rest of the world is to him a passing dream. How finely is this character portrayed where he recollects himself on seeing Paris slain at the tomb of Juliet!

> "What said my man when my betossed soul
> Did not attend him as we rode? I think
> He told me Paris should have married Juliet."

And again, just before he hears the sudden tidings of her death—

> "If I may trust the flattery of sleep,
> My dreams presage some joyful news at hand

My bosom's lord sits lightly in his throne,
And all this day an unaccustom'd spirit
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.
I dreamt my lady came and found me dead
(Strange dream! that gives a dead man leave to think)
And breath'd such life with kisses in my lips,
That I reviv'd, and was an emperor.
Ah me! how sweet is love itself possess'd,
When but love's shadows are so rich in joy!"

Romeo's passion for Juliet is not a first love: it succeeds and drives out his passion for another mistress, Rosaline, as the sun hides the stars. This is perhaps an artifice (not absolutely necessary) to give us a higher opinion of the lady, while the first [illegible] her [illegible] enhances the [illegible] The commencement, progress, and [illegible]

[illegible]

up and prevailing in turn, swayed by the master-mind of the poet, as the waves undulate beneath the gliding storm. Thus when Juliet has by her complaints encouraged the Nurse to say, "Shame come to Romeo," she instantly repels the wish, which she had herself occasioned, by answering—

> "Blister'd be thy tongue
> For such a wish, he was not born to shame
> Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit,
> For 'tis a throne where honor may be crown'd
> Sole monarch of the universal earth!
> O, what a beast was I to chide him so!
> NURSE. Will you speak well of him that killed your cousin?
> JULIET. Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?
> Ah, my poor lord, what tongue shall smooth thy name,
> When I, thy three-hours' wife, have mangled it?"

And then follows, on the neck of her remorse and returning fondness, that wish treading almost on the brink of impiety, but still held back by the strength of her devotion to her lord, that "father, mother, nay, or both were dead," rather than Romeo banished. If she requires any other excuse, it is in the manner in which Romeo echoes her frantic grief and disappointment in the next scene at being banished from her. Perhaps one of the finest pieces of acting that ever was witnessed on the stage, is Mr. Kean's manner of doing this scene and his repetition of the word *Banished*. He treads close indeed upon the genius of his author.

A passage which this celebrated actor and able commentator on Shakspeare (actors are the best commentators on the poets) did not give with equal truth or force of feeling was the one which Romeo makes at the tomb of Juliet, before he drinks the poison.

> ——— "Let me peruse this face—
> Mercutio's kinsman! noble county Paris!
> What said my man when my betoss'd soul
> Did not attend him as we rode! I think,
> He told me Paris should have marry'd Juliet.
> Said he not so? or did I dream it so?
> Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet,
> To think it was so?———O, give me thy hand,

One writ with me in sour misfortune's book!
I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave —
For here lies Juliet.

* * * * *

—— O, my love! my wife!
Death, that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:
Thou art not conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And Death's pale flag is not advanced there. ——
Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?
O, what more favour can I do to thee,
Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain,
[illegible]

[illegible]

quote the whole. The late Mr. Sheridan, on being shown a volume of the Beauties of Shakspeare, very properly asked—"But where are the other eleven?" The character of Mercutio in this play is one of the most mercurial and spirited of the productions of Shakspeare's comic muse.

LEAR.

built with the greatest truth and effect. It is his rash hate, his violent impetuosity, his blindness to everything but the dictates of his passions or affections, that produces all his misfortunes, that aggravates his impatience of them, that enforces our pity for him. The part which Cordelia bears in the scene is extremely beautiful: the story is almost told in the first words she utters. We see at once the precipice on which the poor old king stands from his own extravagant and credulous importunity, the indiscreet simplicity of her love (which, to be sure, has a little of her father's obstinacy in it), and the hollowness of her sisters' pretensions. Almost the first burst of that noble tide of passion, which runs through this play, is in the remonstrance of Kent to his royal master on the injustice of his sentence against his youngest daughter—"Be Kent unmannerly, when Lear is mad!" This manly plainness, which draws down on him the displeasure of the unadvised king, is worthy of the fidelity with which he adheres to his fallen fortunes. The true character of the two eldest daughters, Regan and Gonerill (they are so thoroughly hateful that we do not even like to repeat their names), breaks out in their answer to Cordelia, who desires them to treat their father well—"Prescribe not us our duties"—their hatred of advice being in proportion to their determination to do wrong, and to their hypocritical pretensions to do right. Their deliberate affectation of virtue adds the last finishing to the odiousness of their characters. It is the absence of this detestable quality that is the only relief in the character of Edmund the Bastard, and that at times reconciles us to him. We are not tempted to exaggerate the guilt of his conduct, when he himself gives it up as a bad business, and writes himself down "plain villain." Nothing more can be said about it. His religious honesty in this respect is admirable. One speech of his is worth a million. His father, Gloster, whom he has just deluded with a forged story of his brother Edgar's designs against his life, accounts for his unnatural behavior, and the strange depravity of the times, from the late eclipses in the sun and moon. Edmund, who is in the secret, says when he is gone—"This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune (often the surfeits of our own behavior) we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the

would be too painful, the shock too great, but for the intervention of the Fool, whose well-timed levity comes in to break the continuity of feeling when it can no longer be borne, and to bring into play again the fibres of the heart just as they are rigid from over-strained excitement. The imagination is glad to take refuge in the half-comic, half-serious comments of the Fool, just as the mind under the extreme anguish of a surgical operation vents itself in sallies of wit. The character was also a grotesque ornament of the barbarous times, in which alone the tragic ground-work of the story could be laid. In another point of view it is indispensable, inasmuch as while it is a diversion to the too great intensity of our disgust, it carries the pathos to the highest pitch of which it is capable, by showing the pitiable weakness of the old king's conduct and its irretrievable consequences in the most familiar point of view. Lear may well "beat at the gate which let his folly in," after, as the Fool says, "he has made his daughters his mothers." The character is dropped in the third act to make room for the entrance of Edgar as mad Tom, which well accords with the increasing bustle and wildness of the incidents; and nothing can be more complete than the distinction between Lear's real and Edgar's assumed madness, while the resemblance in the cause of their distresses, from the severing of the nearest ties of natural affection, keeps up a unity of interest. Shakspeare's mastery over his subject, if it was not art, was owing to a knowledge of the connecting links of the passions, and their effect upon the mind, still more wonderful than any systematic adherence to rules, and anticipated and outdid all the efforts of the most refined art, not inspired and rendered instinctive by genius.

One of the most perfect displays of dramatic power is the first interview between Lear and his daughter, after the designed affronts upon him, which, till one of his knights reminds him of them, his sanguine temperament had led him to overlook. He returns with his train from hunting, and his usual impatience breaks out in his first words, "Let me not stay a jot for dinner; go, get it ready." He then encounters the faithful Kent in disguise, and retains him in his service; and the first trial of his honest duty is to trip up the heels of the officious Steward, who

Who is it that can tell me who I am?—Lear's shadow?
I would learn that: for by the marks
Of sov'reignty, of knowledge, and of reason,
I should be false persuaded I had daughters ——
Your name, fair gentlewoman?

GONERILL. Come, sir:
This admiration is much o' the favor
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
To understand my purposes aright:
As you are old and reverend, you should be wise:
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires;
Men so disorder'd, so debauch'd and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn: epicurism and lust
Make it more like a tavern, or a brothel,
Than a grac'd palace. The shame itself doth speak
For instant remedy: be then desir'd
By her, that else will take the thing she begs,
A little to disquantity your train;
And the remainder, that shall still depend,
To be such men as may besort your age,
And know themselves and you.

LEAR. Darkness and devils!——
Saddle my horse; call my train together.——
Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee:
Yet have I left a daughter.

GONERILL. You strike my people; and your disorder'd rabble
Make servants of their betters.

Enter ALBANY

LEAR. Wo, that too late repents—O, sir, are you come?
Is it your will? speak, sir.—Prepare my horses.——
[*To Albany.*
Ingratitude! thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous, when thou show'st thee in a child,
Than the sea-monster!

ALBANY. Pray, sir, be patient.

LEAR. Detested kite! thou liest. [*To Gonerill.*
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
That all particulars of duty know:
And in the most exact regard support
The worships of their name.——O most small fault,
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!
Which, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature
From the fix'd place: drew from my heart all love,
And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!

Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in, [*Striking his head.*
And thy dear judgment out! Go, go, my people!

ALBANY. My lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant
Of what hath mov'd you.

LEAR. It may be so, my lord.—
Hear, nature, hear! dear goddess, hear!
Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
To make this creature fruitful!
Into her womb convey sterility!
Dry up in her the organs of increase;
And from her derogate body never spring
A babe to honour her! If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen; that it may live,
[illegible] a thwart disnatur'd torment to her!
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth;
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks;
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits,
To laughter and contempt; that she may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child! Away, away! [*Exit.*

ALBANY. Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this?

GONERIL. Never afflict yourself to know the cause;
But let his disposition have that scope
That dotage gives it.

Re-enter LEAR.

LEAR. What, fifty of my followers at a clap!
Within a fortnight!

ALBANY. What's the matter, sir?

LEAR. I'll tell thee.—Life and death! I am asham'd
That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus;
[*To Goneril.*
That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,
Should make thee worth them. Blasts and fogs upon thee!
The untented woundings of a father's curse
Pierce every sense about thee! Old fond eyes,
Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck ye out,
And cast you, with the waters that you lose,
To temper clay. Ha! is it come to this?
Let it be so: yet have I left a daughter,
Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable:
When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
She'll flay thy wolvish visage. Thou shalt find
That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think
I have cast off for ever.

[*Exeunt* LEAR, KENT, *and Attendants.*

This is certainly fine: no wonder that Lear says after it, "O let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heavens," feeling its effects by anticipation: but fine as is this burst of rage and indignation at the first blow aimed at his hopes and expectations, it is nothing near so fine as what follows from his double disappointment, and his lingering efforts to see which of them he shall lean upon for support and find comfort in, when both of his daughters turn against his age and weakness. It is with some difficulty that Lear gets to speak with his daughter Regan, and her husband, at Gloster's castle. In concert with Gonerill, they have left their own home on purpose to avoid him. His apprehensions are first alarmed by this circumstance, and when Gloster, whose guests they are, urges the fiery temper of the Duke of Cornwall as an excuse for not importuning him a second time, Lear breaks out,

> "Vengeance! Plague! Death! Confusion!
> Fiery? What fiery quality? Why, Gloster,
> I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife."

Afterwards, feeling perhaps not well himself, he is inclined to admit their excuse from illness, but then recollecting that they have set his messenger (Kent) in the stocks, all his suspicions are roused again, and he insists on seeing them. The scene which ensues is of the higher power. If there is anything in any author like the yearning of the heart, the throes of tenderness, the profound expression of all that can be thought and felt in the most heart-rending situations that it exhibits, we are glad of it; but it is in some author that we have not read.

The scene in the storm, where Lear is exposed to all the fury of the elements, though grand and terrible, is not so fine; but the moralising scenes with mad Tom, Kent, and Gloster, are upon a par with the former. His exclamation in the supposed trial scene of his daughters, "See, the little dogs and all, Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me;" his issuing his orders, "Let them anatomize Regan, see what breeds about her heart;" and his reflection when he sees the misery of Edgar, "Nothing but his unkind daughters could have brought him to this;" are in a style of pathos, where the extremest resources of the imagination are called in to lay open the deepest move-

ments of the heart, which was peculiar to Shakspeare. In the same vein and spirit is his interrupting the Fool, who asks, "whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman," by answering, "A king, a king!"

The indirect part that Gloster takes in these scenes, who feels his own misery leads him to relieve Lear and resent the cruelty of his oppressors at the very time that he is himself assigned to seek the life of his son, and suffering and the sting of his unmerited misfortunes are strongly accompanying the situation of Lear. Indeed, the manner in which the threads of the story are woven together is almost as wonderful in the way of art as the carrying on the tide of passion, still varying and unimpaired, is on the score of nature. Among the remarkable instances of the latter are Edgar's meeting with his old blind father; the outrage he practises upon him when he pretends to lead him to the top of Dover cliff—"Come on, sir, here's the place," to prevent his ending his life and miseries together; his encounter with the perfidious Steward, whom he kills, and his finding the letter from Gonerill to his brother upon him, which leads to the fatal catastrophe, and brings the wheel of Justice "full circle home" to the guilty parties. The hasty and rapid succession of events in the last scenes is surprising. But the meeting between Lear and Cordelia is by far the most affecting part of the whole. It has all the witchery of poetry, and all the heartfelt truth of nature. The gradual return of her recollection of the past—"I am mightily abused; I should even die with pity to see another thus"—her tenderness to her old father—"Will you walk?"—the mixture of the real and the imaginary in his mind—"You must bear with me: pray you now, forget and forgive: I am old and foolish"—Lear's backwardness to recognise the person of the object of his affections, whom he had driven from him—"Do not mock me: for, as I am a man, I think this lady to be my child Cordelia"—and her kneeling to ask his blessing—"And so I am, I am"—are touches of unrivalled beauty and pathos.

CORDELIA. Sir, do you know me?
LEAR. You are a spirit I know: when did you die?
CORDELIA. Still, still far wide!
PHYSICIAN. He's scarce awake; let him alone awhile.
LEAR. Where have I been? Where am I?—Fair daylight?——
I am mightily abused—I should even die with pity,
To see another thus.—I know not what to say.——
I will not swear these are my hands:—let's see;
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assur'd
Of my condition.
CORDELIA. O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me:——
No, sir, you must not kneel.
LEAR. Pray do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward;
Not an hour more, nor less: and, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is; and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night: do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.
CORDELIA And so I am, I am!"

Almost equal to this in awful beauty is their consolation of each other when, after the triumph of their enemies, they are led to prison.

"CORDELIA. We are not the first,
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.
For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;
Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.—
Shall we not see these daughters, and these sisters?
LEAR. No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison:
We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage:
When thou dost ask my blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness: so we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news: and we'll talk with them too—
Who loses, and who wins; who's in, who's out;-
And take upon us the mystery of things,

> And we'll wear out,
> In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones,
> That ebb and flow by the moon.
>
> EDMUND. Take them away.
>
> LEAR. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
> The gods themselves throw incense."

The concluding events are sad, painfully sad; but their pathos is extreme. The oppression of our feelings is relieved by the very interest we take in the misfortunes of others, and by the reflections to which they give birth. Cordelia is hanged in prison by the orders of the bastard Edmund, which are known too late to be countermanded, and Lear dies broken-hearted, lamenting over her.

> "And my poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no life:
> Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
> And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
> Never, never, never, never, never!
> Pray you, undo this button: thank you, sir."—

He dies, and indeed we feel the truth of what Kent says on the occasion—

> "Vex not his ghost: O, let him pass! he hates him,
> That would upon the rack of this tough world
> Stretch him out longer."

Yet a happy ending has been contrived for this play, which is approved of by Dr. Johnson and condemned by Schlegel. A better authority than either, on any subject in which poetry and feeling are concerned, has given it in favour of Shakspeare, in some remarks on the acting of Lear, with which we shall conclude this account.

"The Lear of Shakspeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements, than any actor can be to represent Lear. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual: the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano:

they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that rich sea, his mind, with all its vast riches. It is his mind which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on ; even as he himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the impotence of rage ; while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear ;—we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur, which baffles the malice of daughters and storms ; in the aberrations of his reason, we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning, immethodised from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its powers, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will on the corruptions and abuses of mankind. What have looks or tones to do with that sublime identification of his age with that of *the heavens themselves*, when in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children, he reminds them that "they themselves are old!" What gesture shall we appropriate to this? What has the voice or the eye to do with such things? But the play is beyond all art, as the tamperings with it show : it is too hard and stony : it must have love-scenes, and a happy ending. It is not enough that Cordelia is a daughter, she must shine as a lover too. Tate has put his hook in the nostrils of this Leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the showmen of the scene, to draw it about more easily. A happy ending!—as if the living martyrdom that Lear had gone through,—the flaying of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world's burden after, why all this pudder and preparation—why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station,—as if at his years and with his experience, anything was left but to die."*

Four things have struck us in reading LEAR :

1. That poetry is an interesting study, for this reason, that

* See an article, called *Theatralia*, in the second volume of the ***Reflector***, by Charles Lamb

it relates to whatever is most interesting in human life. Whoever therefore has a contempt for poetry, has a contempt for himself and humanity.

2. That the language of poetry is superior to the language of painting; because the strongest of our recollections relate to feelings, not to faces.

3. That the greatest strength of genius is shown in describing the strongest passions: for the power of the imagination, in works of invention, must be in proportion to the force of the natural impressions, which are the subject of them.

4. That the circumstance which balances the pleasure against the pain in tragedy, is, that in proportion to the greatness of the evil, our sense and desire of the opposite good excited; and that our sympathy with actual suffering is lost in the strong impulse given to our natural affections, and carried away with the swelling tide of passion, that gushes from, and relieves the heart.

RICHARD II.

RICHARD II. is a play little known compared with *Richard III.*, which last is a play that every unfledged candidate for theatrical fame chooses to strut and fret his hour upon the stage in; yet we confess that we prefer the nature and feeling of the one to the noise and bustle of the other; at least, as we are so often forced to see it acted. In RICHARD II., the weakness of the king leaves us leisure to take a greater interest in the misfortunes of the man. After the first act, in which the arbitrariness of his behavior only proves his want of resolution, we see him staggering under the unlooked-for blows of fortune, bewailing his loss of kingly power, not preventing it, sinking under the aspiring genius of Bolingbroke, his authority trampled on, his hopes failing him, and his pride crushed and broken down under insults and injuries, which his own misconduct has provoked, but which he has not courage or manliness to resent. The change of tone and behavior in the two competitors for the throne, according to their change of fortune, from the capricious sentence of banishment passed by Richard upon Bolingbroke, the suppliant offers and modest pretensions of the latter on his return, to the high and haughty tone with which he accepts Richard's resignation of the crown after the loss of all his power, the use which he makes of the deposed king to grace his triumphal progress through the streets of London, and the final intimation of his wish for his death, which immediately finds a servile executioner, is marked throughout with complete effect, and without the slightest appearance of effort. The steps by which Bolingbroke mounts the throne, are those by which Richard sinks into the grave. We feel neither respect nor love for the deposed

monarch; for he is as wanting in energy as in principle: but we pity him, for he pities himself. His heart is by no means hardened against himself, but bleeds afresh at every new stroke of misfortune; and his sensibility, absorbed in his own person, and turned to misfortune, is not only tenderly alive to its own sufferings, but without the fortitude to bear them. He is, however, human in his distresses; for to feel pain and sorrow, weakness, disappointment, remorse and anguish, is the lot of humanity, and we sympathize with him accordingly. The sufferings of the man make us forget that he ever was a king.

The right assumed by sovereign power to trifle at its will with the happiness of others as a matter of course, or to remit its exercise as a matter of favor, is strikingly shown in the sentence of [illegible] pronounced on Bolingbroke and Mowbray, and in what Bolingbroke says when four years of his banishment are taken off, with as little reason.

> "[illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]"

A more affecting image of the loneliness of a state of exile cannot easily be given than by what Bolingbroke afterwards observes of his having "sighed his English breath in foreign [illegible]," or than that conveyed in Mowbray's complaint at being banished for life.

> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> Or [illegible],
> [illegible]
> That [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]

How [illegible] how very *[illegible]*.

Richard II. may be [illegible] series of [illegible] by [illegible] which [illegible] of the in-

vincible knights of old," in which their hearts seem to strike against their coats of mail, where their blood tingles for the fight, and words are but the harbingers of blows. Of this state of accomplished barbarism, the appeal of Bolingbroke and Mowbray is an admirable specimen. Another of these "keen encounters of their wits," which serve to whet the talkers' swords, is where Aumerle answers in the presence of Bolingbroke to the charge which Bagot brings against him, of being an accessory in Gloster's death.

"FITZWATER. If that thy valor stand on sympathies,
There is my gage, Aumerle, in gage to thine;
By that fair sun that shows me where thou stand'st,
I heard thee say, and vauntingly thou spak'st it,
That thou wert cause of noble Gloster's death.
If thou deny'st it twenty times thou liest,
And I will turn thy falsehood to thy heart,
Where it was forged, with my rapier's point.
AUMERLE. Thou dar'st not, coward, live to see the day.
FITZWATER. Now, by my soul, I would it were this hour
AUMERLE. Fitzwater, thou art damn'd to hell for this
PERCY. Aumerle, thou liest; his honor is as true,
In this appeal, as thou art all unjust;
And that thou art so, there I throw my gage
To prove it on thee, to th' extremest point
Of mortal breathing. Seize it, if thou dar'st.
AUMERLE. And if I do not, may my hands rot off,
And never brandish more revengeful steel
Over the glittering helmet of my foe.
Who sets me else? By heav'n, I'll throw at all.
I have a thousand spirits in my breast,
To answer twenty thousand such as you.
SURRY. My Lord Fitzwater, I remember well
The very time Aumerle and you did talk.
FITZWATER. My lord, 't is true: you were in presence then:
And you can witness with me, this is true.
SURRY. As false, by heav'n, as heav'n itself is true.
FITZWATER. Surry, thou liest.
SURRY. Dishonorable boy!
That lie shall lie so heavy on my sword,
That it shall render vengeance and revenge
Till thou the lie-giver and that lie rest
In earth as quiet as thy father's skull.
In proof whereof, there is mine honor's pawn:
Engage it to the trial, if thou dar'st.

FITZWATER. How fondly dost thou spur a forward horse!
If I dare eat, or drink, or breathe, or live,
I dare meet Surrey in a wilderness,
And spit upon him, whilst I say he lies,
And lies, and lies: there is my bond of faith,
To tie thee to my strong correction.
As I intend to thrive in this new world,
Aumerle is guilty of my true appeal."

The truth is, that there is neither truth nor honor in all these noble persons: they answer words with words, as they do blows with blows, in mere self-defence: nor have they any principle whatever but that of courage in maintaining any wrong they dare commit, or any falsehood which they find it useful to assert. How different were these noble knights and "barons bold" from their more refined descendants in the present day, who, instead of deciding questions of right by brute force, refer everything to convenience, fashion, and good breeding! In point of any abstract love of truth or justice, they are just the same now that they were then.

The characters of old John of Gaunt and of his brother York, uncles to the King, the one stern and foreboding, the other honest, good-natured, doing all for the best, and therefore doing nothing, are well kept up. The speech of the former, in praise of England, is one of the most eloquent that ever was penned. We should perhaps hardly be disposed to feed the pampered egotism of our countrymen by quoting this description, were it not that the conclusion of it (which looks prophetic) may qualify any improper degree of exultation.

"This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
This earth of Majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by nature for herself,
Against infection and the hand of war;
This happy breed of men, this little world,
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands;
This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,

Fear'd for their breed and famous for their birth,
Renown'd for their deeds, as far from home,
For Christian service and true chivalry,
As is the sepulchre in stubborn Jewry
Of the world's ransom, blessed Mary's son;
This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world,
Is now leas'd out (I die pronouncing it)
Like to a tenement or pelting farm.
England bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious surge
Of wat'ry Neptune, is bound in with shame,
With inky-blots and rotten parchment bonds.
That England, that was wont to conquer others,
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself."

The character of Bolingbroke, afterwards Henry IV., is drawn with a masterly hand:—patient for occasion, and then steadily availing himself of it, seeing his advantage afar off, but only seizing on it when he has it within his reach, humble, crafty, bold, and aspiring, encroaching by regular but slow degrees, building power on opinion, and cementing opinion by power. His disposition is first unfolded by Richard himself, who however is too self-willed and secure to make a proper use of his knowledge.

"Ourself and Bushy, Bagot here and Green,
Observed his courtship of the common people:
How he did seem to dive into their hearts,
With humble and familiar courtesy,
What reverence he did throw away on slaves;
Wooing poor craftsmen with the craft of smiles,
And patient under-bearing of his fortune,
As 'twere to banish their affections with him.
Off goes his bonnet to an oyster-wench;
A brace of draymen bid God speed him well,
And had the tribute of his supple knee,
With thanks, my countrymen, my loving friends,
As were our England in reversion his,
And he our subjects' next degree in hope."

Afterwards, he gives his own character to Percy, in these words

"I thank thee, gentle Percy, and be sure

"I count myself in nothing else so happy,
As in a soul remembering my good friends;
And as my fortune ripens with thy love,
It shall be still thy true love's recompense."

We know how he afterwards kept his promise. His bold assertion of his own rights, his pretended submission to the king, and the ascendancy which he tacitly assumes over him without openly claiming it, as soon as he has him in his power, are characteristic traits of this ambitious and politic usurper. But the part of Richard himself gives the chief interest to the play. His folly, his vices, his misfortunes, his reluctance to part with the crown, his fear to keep it, his weak and womanish regrets, his starting tears, his fits of hectic passion, his smothered majesty, pass in succession before us, and make a picture as natural as it is affecting. Among the most striking touches of pathos are his wish "O that I were a mockery king of snow, to melt away before the sun of Bolingbroke," and the incident of the poor groom who comes to visit him in prison, and tells him how "it yearned his heart that Bolingbroke upon his coronation day rode on Roan Barbary." We shall have occasion to return hereafter to the character of Richard II. in speaking of Henry VI. There is only one passage more, the description of his entrance into London with Bolingbroke, which we should like to quote here, if it had not been so used and worn out, so thumbed and got by rote, so praised and painted; but its beauty surmounts all these considerations.

"Duchess. My lord, you told me you would tell the rest,
When weeping made you break the story off
Of our two cousins coming into London.
York. Where did I leave?
Duchess. At that sad stop, my lord,
Where rude misgovern'd hands, from window tops,
Threw dust and rubbish on king Richard's head.
York. Then, as I said, the duke, great Bolingbroke,
Mounted upon a hot and fiery steed,
Which his aspiring rider seem'd to know,
With slow but stately pace kept on his course,
While all tongues cried—God save thee, Bolingbroke!
You would have thought the very windows spake,

So many greedy looks of young and old
Through casements darted their desiring eyes
Upon his visage; and that all the walls,
With painted imag'ry, had said at once—
Jesu preserve thee! welcome Bolingbroke!
Whilst he, from one side to the other turning,
Bare-headed, lower than his proud steed's neck,
Bespake them thus—I thank you, countrymen:
And thus still doing thus he pass'd along.

DUCHESS. Alas, poor Richard! where rides he the while?

YORK. As in a theatre, the eyes of men,
After a well-graced actor leaves the stage,
Are idly bent on him that enters next,
Thinking his prattle to be tedious:
Even so, or with much more contempt, men's eyes
Did scowl on Richard; no man cried God save him!
No joyful tongue gave him his welcome home:
But dust was thrown upon his sacred head!
Which with such gentle sorrow he shook off
His face still combating with tears and smiles,
The badges of his grief and patience—
That had not God, for some strong purpose, steel'd
The hearts of men, they must perforce have melted,
And barbarism itself have pitied him."

HENRY IV.

IN TWO PARTS.

If Shakspeare's fondness for the ludicrous sometimes led to faults in his tragedies (which was not often the case) he has made us amends by the character of Falstaff. This is perhaps the most substantial comic character that ever was invented. Sir John carries a most portly presence in the mind's eye; and in him, not to speak it profanely, "we behold the fulness of the spirit of wit and humor bodily." We are as well acquainted with his person as his mind, and his jokes come upon us with double force and relish from the quantity of flesh through which they make their way, as he shakes his fat sides with laughter, or "lards the lean earth as he walks along." Other comic cha- [illegible]

in the boundless luxury of his imagination and the pampered self-indulgence of his physical appetites. He manures and nourishes his mind with jests, as he does his body with sack and sugar. He carves out his jokes, as he would a capon, or a haunch of venison, where there is *cut and come again;* and pours out upon them the oil of gladness. His tongue drops fatness, and in the chambers of his brain "it snows of meat and drink." He keeps up perpetual holiday and open house, and we live with him in a round of invitations to a rump and dozen.— Yet we are not to suppose that he was a mere sensualist. All this is as much in imagination as in reality. His sensuality does not engross and stupify his other faculties, but "ascends me into the brain, clears away all the dull, crude vapors that environ it, and makes it full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes." His imagination keeps up the ball after his senses have done with it. He seems to have even a greater enjoyment of the freedom from restraint, of good cheer, of his ease, of his vanity, in the ideal exaggerated descriptions which he gives of them, than in fact. He never fails to enrich his discourse with allusions to eating and drinking, but we never see him at table. He carries his own larder about with him, and he is himself "a tun of man." His pulling out the bottle in the field of battle is a joke to show his contempt for glory accompanied with danger, his systematic adherence to his Epicurean philosophy in the most trying circumstances. Again, such is his deliberate exaggeration of his own vices, that it does not seem quite certain whether the account of his hostess's bill, found in his pocket, with such an out-of-the-way charge for capons and sack with only one halfpenny-worth of bread, was not put there by himself as a trick to humor the jest upon his favorite propensities, and as a conscious caricature of himself. He is represented as a liar, a braggart, a coward, a glutton, &c., and yet we are not offended but delighted with him; for he is all these as much to amuse others as to gratify himself. He openly assumes all these characters to show the humorous part of them. The unrestrained indulgence of his own ease, appetites, and convenience, has neither malice nor hypocrisy in it. In a word, he is an actor in himself almost as

much as upon the stage, and we no more object to the character of Falstaff in a moral point of view than we should think of bringing an excellent comedian, who should represent him to the life, before one of the police offices. We only consider the number of pleasant lights in which he puts certain foibles (the more pleasant as they are opposed to the received and necessary notions of society), and do not trouble ourselves about the consequences resulting from them, for no mischievous consequences do result. Sir John is old as well as fat, which gives a melancholy retrospective tinge to the character; and by the disparity between his inclinations and his capacity for enjoyment, makes it still more ridiculous and fantastical.

The secret of Falstaff's wit is for the most part a masterly presence of mind, an absolute self-possession, which nothing can disturb. His repartees are involuntary suggestions of his self-love; instinctive evasions of everything that threatens to interrupt the career of his triumphant jollity and self-complacency. His very size floats him out of all his difficulties in a sea of rich conceits; and he turns round on the pivot of his convenience, with every occasion and at a moment's warning. His natural repugnance to every unpleasant thought or circumstance, of itself makes light of objections, and provokes the most extravagant and licentious answers in his own justification. His indifference to truth puts no check upon his invention, and the more improbable and unexpected his contrivances are, the more happily [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

P. HENRY. Why, what a pox have I to do with mine hostess of the tavern?"

In the same scene he afterwards affects melancholy, from pure satisfaction of heart, and professes reform, because it is the farthest thing in the world from his thoughts. He has no qualms of conscience, and therefore would as soon talk of them as of anything else when the humor takes him.

"FALSTAFF. But Hal, I pr'ythee trouble me no more with vanity. I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought: an old lord of council rated me the other day in the street about you, sir; but I mark'd him not, and yet he talked very wisely, and in the street too.

P. HENRY. Thou didst well, for wisdom cries out in the street, and no man regards it.

FALSTAFF. O, thou hast damnable iteration, and art indeed able to corrupt a saint. Thou hast done much harm unto me, Hal, God forgive thee for it. Before I knew thee, Hal, I knew nothing, and now I am, if a man should speak truly, little better than one of the wicked. I must give over this life, and I will give it over, by the lord; an I do not, I am a villain. I'll be damn'd for never a king's son in Christendom.

P. HENRY. Where shall we take a purse to-morrow, Jack?

FALSTAFF. Where thou wilt, lad, I'll make one; an I do not, call me villain, and baffle me.

P. HENRY. I see good amendment of life in thee, from praying to purse-taking.

FALSTAFF. Why, Hal, 'tis my vocation, Hal. 'Tis no sin for a man to labor in his vocation."

Of the other prominent passages, his account of his pretended resistance to the robbers, "who grew from four men in buckram into eleven" as the imagination of his own valor increased with his relating it, his getting off when the truth is discovered by pretending he knew the Prince, the scene in which in the person of the old king he lectures the prince and gives himself a good character, the soliloquy on honor, and description of his new-raised recruits, his meeting with the chief justice, his abuse of the Prince and Poins, who overhear him, to Doll Tearsheet, his reconciliation with Mrs. Quickly who has arrested him for an old debt, and whom he persuades to pawn her plate to lend him ten pounds more, and the scenes with Shallow and Silence, are

all inimitable. Of all of them, the scene in which Falstaff plays the part, first, of the King, and then of Prince Henry, is the one that has been the most often quoted. We must quote it once more in illustration of our remarks.

"FALSTAFF. Harry, I do not only marvel where thou spendest thy time, but also how thou art accompanied: for though the camomile, the more it is trodden on, the faster it grows, yet youth, the more it is wasted, the sooner it wears. That thou art my son, I have partly thy mother's word, partly my own opinion; but chiefly, a villainous trick of thine eye, and a foolish hanging of thy nether lip, that doth warrant me. If then thou be son to me, here lies the point;—Why, being son to me, art thou so pointed at? [illegible] blackberries? [illegible] Shall the son of England prove a thief, and take purses? a question not to be asked. [illegible] Harry, which [illegible]

[illegible]

P. HENRY. What manner of man, an it like your majesty?

FALSTAFF. [illegible]

[illegible]

dost thou converse with that trunk of humors, that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swoln parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack, that stuft cloak-bag of guts, that roasted Manning-tree ox with the pudding in his belly, that reverend vice, that grey iniquity, that father ruffian, that vanity in years? wherein is he good, but to taste sack and drink it? wherein neat and cleanly, but to carve a capon and eat it? wherein cunning, but in craft? wherein crafty, but in villainy? wherein villainous, but in all things? wherein worthy, but in nothing?

FALSTAFF. I would your grace would take me with you, whom means your grace?

P. HENRY. That villainous, abominable mis-leader of youth, Falstaff, that old white-bearded Satan.

FALSTAFF. My lord, the man I know.

P. HENRY I know thou dost.

FALSTAFF. But to say, I know more harm in him than in myself, were to say more than I know. That he is old (the more the pity), his white hairs do witness it: but that he is (saving your reverence) a whore-master, that I utterly deny. If sack and sugar be a fault, God help the wicked! if to be old and merry be a sin, then many an old host that I know is damned: if to be fat be to be hated, then Pharaoh's lean kine are to be loved. No, my good lord; banish Peto, banish Bardolph, banish Poins: but for sweet Jack Falstaff, kind Jack Falstaff, true Jack Falstaff, valiant Jack Falstaff, and therefore more valiant, being as he is, old Jack Falstaff, banish not him thy Harry's company; banish plump Jack, and banish all the world.

P. HENRY. I do, I will.

[*Knocking; and Hostess and Bardolph go out.*

Re-enter BARDOLPH, *running.*

BARDOLPH. O, my lord, my lord; the sheriff, with a most monstrous watch, is at the door.

FALSTAFF. Out, you rogue! play out the play: I have much to say in the behalf of that same Falstaff."

One of the most characteristic descriptions of Sir John is that which Mrs. Quickly gives of him when he asks her "What is the gross sum that I owe thee?"

"HOSTESS. Marry, if thou wert an honest man, thyself, and the money too. Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin-chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire on Wednesday in Whitsun-week, when the prince broke thy head for likening his father to a singing man of Windsor: thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me, and make me my lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not goodwife Keech, the butcher's wife, come in then, and call

"Falstaff. You have here a goodly dwelling, and a rich.

Shallow. Barren, barren, barren; beggars all, beggars all, Sir John marry, good air. Spread Davy, spread Davy. Well said, Davy.

Falstaff. This Davy serves you for good uses.

Shallow. A good varlet, a good varlet, a very good varlet. By the mass, I have drank too much sack at supper. A good varlet. Now sit down, now sit down. Come, cousin."

The true spirit of humanity, the thorough knowledge of the stuff we are made of, the practical wisdom, with the seeming fooleries in the whole of the garden-scene at Shallow's country-seat, and just before, in the exquisite dialogue between him and Silence on the death of old Double, have no parallel anywhere else. In one point of view they are laughable in the extreme; in another they are equally affecting, if it is affecting to show *what a little thing is human life*, what a poor forked creature man is!

The heroic and serious part of these two plays, founded on the story of Henry IV., is not inferior to the comic and farcical. The characters of Hotspur and Prince Henry are two of the most beautiful and dramatic, both in themselves and from contrast, that ever were drawn. They are the essence of chivalry. We like Hotspur the best, upon the whole, perhaps because he was unfortunate. The characters of their fathers, Henry IV. and old Northumberland, are kept up equally well. Henry naturally succeeds by his prudence and caution in keeping what he has got; Northumberland fails in his enterprise from an excess of the same quality, and is caught in the web of his own cold, dilatory policy. Owen Glendower is a masterly character. It is as bold and original as it is intelligible and thoroughly natural. The disputes between him and Hotspur are managed with infinite address and insight into nature. We cannot help pointing out here some very beautiful lines, where Hotspur describes the fight between Glendower and Mortimer.

—"When on the gentle Severn's sedgy bank,
In single opposition hand to hand,
He did confound the best part of an hour
In changing hardiment with great Glendower;
Three times they breath'd, and three times did they drink,
Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood;

> Who then cold as he, that dares not move,
> Revenge the trespass most apparent laid?
> And with the same to act the same all dare,
> And that is more than he will dare to do.

The peculiarity and the excellence of Shakspeare's poetry is, that it seems as if he made his imagination the handmaid of nature, and nature the plaything of his imagination. He appears to have been all the characters, and in all the circumstances he has described. It is as if other bards had had all their feelings, he had lent them all his genius to express themselves. There cannot be a stronger instance of this than Hotspur's rage when Henry IV. forbids him to speak of Mortimer, his insensibility to all that [illegible] "By heaven, methinks, it were an easy leap [illegible]" &c. After all, notwithstanding [illegible] Hotspur and Prince Hal [illegible] Prince of Wales, we should have been sorry, [illegible] to have come up in time to decide the fate of the battle at Shrewsbury; as it was, we always heartily sympathize with Lady Percy's grief, when she exclaims,

> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]

The [illegible] that we have [illegible] the Prince's treatment [illegible] Hotspur. [illegible] what was [illegible] of [illegible] We [illegible] We [illegible] to [illegible] of [illegible] Hotspur. [illegible] the [illegible] of [illegible] Falstaff [illegible] of the [illegible] We [illegible] and [illegible]

HENRY V.

HENRY V. is a very favorite monarch with the English nation, and he appears to have been also a favorite with Shakspeare, who labors hard to apologise for the actions of the king, by showing us the character of the man, as "the king of good fellows." He scarcely deserves this honor. He was fond of war and low company: we know little else of him. He was careless, dissolute, and ambitious; idle, or doing mischief. In private, he seemed to have no idea of the common decencies of life, which he subjected to a kind of regal license; in public affairs, he seemed to have no idea of any rule of right or wrong, but brute force, glossed over with a little religious hypocrisy and archi-episcopal advice. His principles did not change with his situation and professions. His adventure on Gadshill was a prelude to the affair of Agincourt, only a bloodless one; Falstaff was a puny prompter of violence and outrage, compared with the pious and politic Archbishop of Canterbury, who gave the king *carte blanche*, in a genealogical tree of his family, to rob and murder in circles of latitude and longitude abroad—to save the possessions of the church at home. This appears in the speeches in Shakspeare, where the hidden motives that actuate princes and their advisers in war and policy are better laid open than in speeches from the throne or woolsack. Henry, because he did not know how to govern his own kingdom, determined to make war upon his neighbors. Because his own title to the crown was doubtful, he laid claim to that of France. Because he did not know how to exercise the enormous power which had just dropped into his hands, to any one good purpose, he immediately undertook (a cheap and obvious resource of sovereignty)

end of the world; with this difference, that the object of war

roar, so we take a very romantic, heroic, patriotic, and poetical delight in the boasts and feats of our younger Harry, as they appear on the stage, and are confined to lines of ten syllables; where no blood follows the stroke that wounds our ears, where no harvest bends beneath horses' hoofs, no city flames, no little child is butchered, no dead men's bodies are found piled on heaps and festering the next morning—in the orchestra!

So much for the politics of this play; now for the poetry. Perhaps one of the most striking images in all Shakspeare is that given of war in the first lines of the Prologue.

> "O for a muse of fire that would ascend
> The brightest heaven of invention,
> A kingdom for a stage, princes to act,
> And monarchs to behold the swelling scene!
> Then should the warlike Harry, like himself,
> Assume the port of Mars, and *at his heels*
> *Leash'd in, like hounds, should famine, sword, and fire,*
> *Crouch for employment.*"

Rubens, if he had painted it, would not have improved upon this simile.

The conversation between the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ely, relating to the sudden change in the manners of Henry V., is among the well-known *Beauties* of Shakspeare. It is indeed admirable both for strength and grace. It has sometimes occurred to us that Shakspeare, in describing "the reformation" of the prince, might have had an eye to himself—

> "Which is a wonder how his grace should glean it,
> Since his addiction was to courses vain
> His companies unletter'd, rude and shallow,
> His hours fill'd up with riots, banquets, sports;
> And never noted in him any study,
> Any retirement, any sequestration
> From open haunts and popularity.
>
> ELY. The strawberry grows underneath the nettle,
> And wholesome berries thrive and ripen best
> Neighbor'd by fruit of baser quality:
> And so the prince obscur'd his contemplation
> Under the veil of wildness, which no doubt

> "Grew like the summer-grass, fastest by night,
> Unseen, yet crescive in his faculty."

This at least is as probable an account of the progress of the poet's mind as we have met with in any of the Essays on the Learning of Shakspeare.

Nothing can be better managed than the caution which the king gives the meddling archbishop, not to advise him rashly to engage in the war with France, his scrupulous dread of the consequences of that advice, and his eager desire to hear and follow it.

> "And God forbid, my dear and faithful lord,
> That you should fashion, wrest, or bow your reading,
> Or nicely charge your understanding soul
> With opening titles miscreate, whose right
> Suits not in native colours with the truth;
> For God doth know how many, now in health,
> Shall drop their blood in approbation
> Of what your reverence shall incite us to.
> Therefore take heed how you impawn our person,
> How you awake our sleeping sword of war:
> We charge you, in the name of God, take heed;
> For never two such kingdoms did contend
> Without much fall of blood; whose guiltless drops
> Are every one a woe, a sore complaint
> 'Gainst him whose wrong gives edge unto the swords
> That make such waste in brief mortality.
> Under this conjuration, speak, my lord,
> For we will hear, note, and believe in heart,
> That what you speak is in your conscience wash'd
> As pure as sin with baptism."

Another characteristic instance of the blindness of human nature to everything but its own interests is the complaint made by the king of "the ill neighborhood" of the Scot in attacking England when she was attacking France.

> "For once the eagle England being in prey,
> To her unguarded nest the weasel Scot
> Comes sneaking, and so sucks her princely eggs.

It is worth observing that in all these plays, which give an admirable picture of the spirit of the *good old times*, the moral inference does not at all depend upon the nature of the actions, but on the dignity or meanness of the persons committing them. "The eagle England" has a right "to be in prey," but "the weazel Scot" has none "to come sneaking to her nest," which she has left to pounce upon others. Might was right, without equivocation or disguise, in that heroic and chivalrous age. The substitution of right for might, even in theory, is among the refinements and abuses of modern philosophy.

A more beautiful rhetorical delineation of the effects of subordination in a commonwealth can hardly be conceived than the following :—

> "For government, though high and low and lower,
> Put into parts, doth keep in one consent,
> Congruing in a full and natural close,
> Like music.
> ——Therefore heaven doth divide
> The state of man in divers functions,
> Setting endeavor in continual motion;
> To which is fixed, as an aim or butt,
> Obedience: for so work the honey bees;
> Creatures that by a rule in nature, teach
> The art of order to a peopled kingdom.
> They have a king, and officers of sorts
> Where some, like magistrates, correct at home;
> Others, like merchants, venture trade abroad;
> Others, like soldiers, armed in their stings,
> Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds;
> Which pillage they with merry march bring home
> To the tent-royal of their emperor:
> Who, busied in his majesty, surveys
> The singing masons building roofs of gold,
> The civil citizens kneading up the honey,
> The poor mechanic porters crowding in
> Their heavy burthens at his narrow gate;
> The sad-eyed justice, with his surly hum,
> Delivering o'er to executors pale
> The lazy yawning drone. I this infer,
> That many things, having full reference
> To one consent, may work contrariously:
> As many arrows, loosed several ways,

Come to one mark; as many ways meet in one town;
As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea;
As many lines close in the dial's centre;
So may a thousand actions, once afoot,
End in one purpose, and be all well borne
Without defeat."

Henry V. is but one of Shakspeare's second-rate plays. Yet by quoting passages, like this, from his second-rate plays alone, we might make a volume "rich with his praise,"

"As is the oozy bottom of the sea
With sunken wreck and sumless treasuries."

Of this sort are the king's remonstrance to Scroop, Grey, and Cambridge, on the detection of their treason, his address to the soldiers at the siege of Harfleur, and the still finer one before the battle of Agincourt, the description of the night before the battle, and the reflections on ceremony put into the mouth of the king.

"O [illegible] greatness,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] form,
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] greatness,
[illegible]
[illegible] will go out
[illegible]?

[illegible]

Will it give place to flexure and low bending!
Can'st thou, when thou command'st the beggar's knee,
Command the health of it? No, thou proud dream,
That play'st so subtly with a king's repose,
I am a king, that find thee: and I know,
'Tis not the balm, the sceptre, and the ball,
The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
The inter-tissu'd robe of gold and pearl,
The farsed title running 'fore the king,
The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp
That beats upon the shore of the world:
No, not all these, thrice-gorgeous ceremony:
Not all these, laid in bed majestical,
Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave;
Who with a body fill'd, and vacant mind,
Gets him to rest, cramm'd with distressful bread,
Never sees horrid night, the child of hell:
But, like a lacquey, from the rise to set,
Sweats in the eye of Phœbus, and all night
Sleeps in Elysium; next day, after dawn,
Doth rise, and help Hyperion to his horse;
And follows so the ever-running year
With profitable labor, to his grave:
And, but for ceremony, such a wretch,
Winding up days with toil, and nights with sleep,
Has the forehand and vantage of a king.
The slave, a member of the country's peace,
Enjoys it; but in gross brain little wots
What watch the king keeps to maintain the peace,
Whose hours the peasant best advantages."

Most of these passages are well known: there is one, which we do not remember to have seen noticed, and yet it is no whit inferior to the rest in heroic beauty. It is the account of the deaths of York and Suffolk.

"EXETER. The Duke of York commends him to your majesty.
K. HENRY. Lives he, good uncle? Thrice within this hour
I saw him down; thrice up again, and fighting;
From helmet to the spur all blood he was.
EXETER. In which array (brave soldier) doth he lie,
Larding the plain: and by his bloody side
(Yoke-fellow to his honor-owing wounds)
The noble Earl of Suffolk also lies.
Suffolk first died: and York, all haggled o'er,

Comes to him, where in gore he lay insteep'd,
And takes him by the beard; kisses the gashes,
That bloodily did yawn upon his face;
And cries aloud, *Tarry, dear cousin Suffolk!*
My soul shall thine keep company to heaven:
Tarry, sweet soul, for mine, then fly a-breast,
As, in this glorious and well-foughten field,
We kept together in our chivalry!
Upon these words I came, and cheer'd him up:
He smil'd me in the face, raught me his hand,
And, with a feeble gripe, says—*Dear my lord,*
Commend my service to my sovereign.
So did he turn, and over Suffolk's neck
He threw his wounded arm, and kiss'd his lips;
And so, espous'd to death, with blood he seal'd
A testament of noble-ending love."

But we must have done with splendid quotations. The behaviour of the king, in the difficult and doubtful circumstances in which he is placed, is as patient and modest as it is spirited and lofty in his prosperous fortune. The character of the French nobles is also very admirably depicted; and the Dauphin's praise of his horse shows the vanity of that class of persons in a very striking point of view. Shakespear always accompanies a foolish prince with a satirical courtier, as we see in this instance. The comic parts of Henry V. are very inferior to those of *Henry IV.* Falstaff is dead, and without him, Pistol, Nym, and Bardolph are satellites without a sun. Fluellen the Welchman is the most entertaining character in the piece. He is good-natured, brave, choleric, and pedantic. His parallel between Alexander and Harry of Monmouth, and his desire to have "some disputations" with Captain Macmorris on the discipline of the Roman wars, in the heat of the battle, are never to be forgotten. His treatment of Pistol is as good as Pistol's treatment of his French prisoner. There are two other remarkable prose passages in this play: the conversation of Henry in disguise with the three sentinels on the duties of a soldier, and his courtship of Katherine in broken French. We like them both exceedingly, though the first savours perhaps too much of the king, and the last too little of the lover.

HENRY VI.

IN THREE PARTS.

DURING the time of the civil wars of York and Lancaster, England was a perfect bear-garden, and Shakspeare has given us a very lively picture of the scene. The three parts of HENRY VI. convey a picture of very little else; and are inferior to the other historical plays. They have brilliant passages; but the general ground-work is comparatively poor and meagre, the style "flat and unraised." There are few lines like the following:

> "Glory is like a circle in the water;
> Which never ceaseth to enlarge itself,
> Till by broad spreading it disperse to naught."

The first part relates to the wars in France after the death of Henry V., and the story of the Maid of Orleans. She is here almost as scurvily treated, as in Voltaire's *Pucelle*. Talbot is a very magnificent sketch: there is something as formidable in this portrait of him, as there would be in a monumental figure of him or in the sight of the armor which he wore. The scene in which he visits the Countess of Auvergne, who seeks to entrap him, is a very spirited one; and his description of his own treatment, while a prisoner to the French, not less remarkable.

> SALISBURY. Yet tell'st thou not, how thou wert entertain'd.
> TALBOT. With scoffs and scorns, and contumelious taunts,
> In open market-place produced they me,
> To be a public spectacle to all.

Here, said they, is the end of the French,
[illegible] that affirm'd so,
[illegible] from the oak that we hew,
[illegible] to the ground,
[illegible] steeled with steel.
My gashy [illegible] sudden death,
[illegible] sudden death.
[illegible] spread,
[illegible] steel,
[illegible] heart."

The second part relates chiefly to the contests between the nobility during the minority of Henry, and the death of Gloucester, the good Duke Humphrey. The character of Cardinal Beaufort is the most prominent of the group: the account of his death is one of the author's masterpieces. So is the speech of Gloucester to the nobles on the loss of the provinces of France by the king's marriage with Margaret of Anjou. The pretensions and growing ambition of the Duke of York, the father of Richard III., are also very ably developed. Among the episodes, the tragi-comedy of Jack Cade, and the detection of the impostor Simcox, are truly edifying.

The [illegible] Henry's loss of his crown: his death takes place in the last act, which is usually thrust into the commencement of the play of *Richard III.* The character of Gloucester, however, in Richard III., is very powerfully pronounced, and [illegible] and long-hidden ambition are fully developed in the soliloquy in the third act, beginning, "Ay, Edward will use women honorably." Henry VI. is drawn as a [illegible] Queen, and [illegible] the very most to which Henry rises is a feeling we could [illegible] more [illegible].

We [illegible] Shakspeare was [illegible] never [illegible] and [illegible] of his characters, [illegible] with which it was [illegible] first [illegible] instance,

the soul of Othello is hardly more distinct from that of Iago than that of Desdemona is shown to be from Æmilia's; the ambition of Macbeth is as distinct from the ambition of Richard III. as it is from the meekness of Duncan; the real madness of Lear is as different from the feigned madness of Edgar* as from the babbling of the fool; the contrast between wit and folly in Falstaff and Shallow is not more characteristic though more obvious than the gradations of folly, loquacious or reserved, in Shallow and Silence; and again, the gallantry of Prince Henry is as little confounded with that of Hotspur as with the cowardice of Falstaff, or as the sensual and philosophic cowardice of the Knight is with the pitiful and cringing cowardice of Parolles. All these several personages were as different in Shakspeare as they would have been in themselves: his imagination borrowed from the life, and every circumstance, object, motive, passion, operated there as it would in reality, and produced a world of men and women as distinct, as true, and as various as those that exist in nature. The peculiar property of Shakspeare's imagination was his truth, accompanied with the unconsciousness of nature: indeed, imagination to be perfect must be unconscious, at least in production; for nature is so. We shall attempt one example more in the characters of Richard II. and Henry VI.

The characters and situations of both these persons were so nearly alike, that they would have been completely confounded by a common-place poet. Yet they are kept quite distinct in Shakspeare. Both were kings, and both unfortunate. Both lost their crowns owing to their mismanagement and imbecility; the one from a thoughtless, wilful abuse of power, the other from an indifference to it. The manner in which they bear their misfortunes corresponds exactly to the causes which led to them. The one is always lamenting the loss of his power, which he has not the spirit to regain; the other seems only to regret that he had ever been king, and is glad to be rid of the power, with the trouble: the effeminacy of the one is that of a voluptuary,

* There is another instance of the same distinction in Hamlet and Ophelia. Hamlet's pretended madness would make a very good real madness in any other author.

proud, revengeful, impatient of contradiction, and inconsolable in his misfortunes; the effeminacy of the other is that of an indolent, good-natured mind, naturally averse to the turmoils of ambition and the cares of greatness, and who wishes to pass his time in monkish indolence and contemplation. Richard bewails the loss of the kingly power only as it was the means of gratifying his pride and luxury; Henry regards it only as a means of doing right, and is less desirous of the advantages to be derived from possessing it than afraid of exercising it wrong. In knighting a young soldier, he gives him ghostly advice—

"Edward Plantagenet, arise a knight,
And learn this lesson, draw thy sword in right."

Richard II. in the first speeches of the play betrays his real character. In the first alarm of his pride, on hearing of Bolingbroke's rebellion, before his presumption has met with any check, he exclaims—

"Mock not my senseless conjuration, lords:
This earth shall have a feeling, and these stones
Prove armed soldiers, ere her native king
Shall falter under foul rebellious arms.
. . . . . .
Not all the water in the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm from an anointed king;
The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord.
For every man that Bolingbroke hath press'd,
To lift shrewd steel against our golden crown,
God for his Richard hath in heavenly pay
A glorious angel; then if angels fight,
Weak men must fall; for Heaven still guards the right."

Yet notwithstanding this royal confidence and faith, on the very first news of actual disaster, all his conceit of himself as the peculiar favourite of Providence vanishes into air.

"But now the blood of twenty thousand men
Did triumph in my face, and they are fled.
All souls that will be safe, fly from my side;
For time hath set a blot upon my pride."

Immediately after, however, recollecting that "cheap defence" of the divinity of kings which is to be found in opinion, he is for arming his name against his enemies.

> "Awake, thou coward Majesty, thou sleep'st;
> Is not the King's name forty thousand names?
> Arm, arm, my name; a puny subject strikes
> At thy great glory!"

King Henry does not make any such vaporing resistance to the loss of his crown, but lets it slip from off his head as a weight which he is neither able nor willing to bear; stands quietly by to see the issue of the contest for his kingdom, as if it were a game at push-pin, and is pleased when the odds prove against him.

When Richard first hears of the death of his favorites, Bushy, Bagot, and the rest, he indignantly rejects all idea of any further efforts, and only indulges in the extravagant impatience of his grief and his despair, in that fine speech which has been so often quoted:—

> "Aumerle. Where is the duke my father, with his power?
> K. Richard. No matter where: of comfort no man speak:
> Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs,
> Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes
> Write sorrow in the bosom of the earth!
> Let's choose executors, and talk of wills:
> And yet not so—for what can we bequeath,
> Save our deposed bodies to the ground?
> Our lands, our lives, and all are Bolingbroke's,
> And nothing can we call our own but death,
> And that small model of the barren earth,
> Which serves as paste and cover to our bones.
> For heaven's sake let us sit upon the ground,
> And tell sad stories of the death of kings.
> How some have been depos'd, some slain in war;
> Some haunted by the ghosts they dispossess'd;
> Some poison'd by their wives, some sleeping kill'd,
> All murder'd:—for within the hollow crown,
> That rounds the mortal temples of a king,
> Keeps death his court: and there the antic sits,
> Scoffing his state, and grinning at his pomp!

Allowing him a breath, a little scene
To monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks;
Infusing him with self and vain conceit—
As if this flesh, which walls about our life,
Were brass impregnable; and, humour'd thus,
Comes at the last, and with a little pin
Bores through his castle walls, and farewell king!
Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood
With solemn reverence; throw away respect,
Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty,
For you have but mistook me all this while:
I live on bread like you, feel want, taste grief,
Need friends, like you;—subjected thus,
How can you say to me—I am a king?"

There is as little sincerity afterwards in his affected resignation to his fate, as there is fortitude in this exaggerated picture of his misfortunes before they have happened.

When Northumberland comes back with the message from Bolingbroke, he exclaims, anticipating the result,—

"What must the king do now? Must he submit?
The king shall do it: must he be depos'd?
The king shall be contented: must he lose
The name of king? O' God's name, let it go;
I'll give my jewels for a set of beads;
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage;
My gay apparel for an alms-man's gown;
My figur'd goblets for a dish of wood;
My sceptre for a palmer's walking-staff;
My subjects for a pair of carved saints;
And my large kingdom for a little grave—
A little, little grave, an obscure grave."

How differently is all this expressed in King Henry's soliloquy during the battle with Edward's party:—

"This battle fares like to the morning's war,
When dying clouds contend with growing light,
What time the shepherd, blowing of his nails,
Can neither call it perfect day nor night.
Here on this mole-hill will I sit me down;
To whom God will, there be the victory!
For Margaret my queen, and Clifford too,

Have chid me from the battle, swearing both
They prosper best of all when I am thence.
Would I were dead, if God's good will were so,
For what is in this world but grief and wo?
O God! methinks it were a happy life
To be no better than a homely swain,
To sit upon a hill as I do now,
To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,
Thereby to see the minutes how they run:
How many make the hour full complete,
How many hours bring about the day,
How many days will finish up the year,
How many years a mortal man may live.
When this is known, then to divide the times:
So many hours must I tend my flock,
So many hours must I take my rest,
So many hours must I contemplate,
So many hours must I sport myself;
So many days my ewes have been with young,
So many weeks ere the poor fools will yean,
So many months ere I shall shear the fleece:
So many minutes, hours, weeks, months, and years
Past over, to the end they were created,
Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.
Ah! what a life were this! how sweet, how lovely!
Gives not the hawthorn bush a sweeter shade
To shepherds looking on their silly sheep,
Than doth a rich embroidered canopy
To kings that fear their subjects' treachery?
O yes it doth, a thousand-fold it doth,
And to conclude, the shepherd's homely curds,
His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle,
His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,
All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,
Is far beyond a prince's delicates,
His viands sparkling in a golden cup,
His body couched in a curious bed,
Where care, mistrust, and treasons wait on him."

This is a true and beautiful description of a naturally quiet and contented disposition, and not, like the former, the splenetic effusion of disappointed ambition.

In the last scene of Richard II. his despair lends him courage: he beats the keeper, slays two of his assassins, and dies with im-

precautions in his mouth against Sir Pierce Exton, who "had stagg'red his royal person." Henry, whom he is seized by the three murderers, only reads them a moral lecture on the duty of allegiance and the sanctity of an oath; and when stabbed by Richard in the Tower, reproaches him with his crimes, but pardons him his own death.

RICHARD III.

RICHARD III. may be considered as properly a stage-play: it belongs to the theatre, rather than to the closet. We shall therefore criticise it chiefly with a reference to the manner in which we have seen it performed. It is the character in which Garrick came out: it was the second character in which Mr. Kean appeared, and in which he acquired his fame. Shakspeare we have always with us: actors we have only for a few seasons; and therefore some account of them may be acceptable, if not to our contemporaries, to those who come after us, if "that rich and idle personage, Posterity," should deign to look into our writings.

It is possible to form a higher conception of the character of Richard than that given by Mr. Kean (not from seeing any other actor, but from reading Shakspeare); but we cannot imagine any character represented with greater distinctness and precision, more perfectly *articulated* in every part. Perhaps indeed there is too much of what is technically called execution. When we first saw this celebrated actor in the part, we thought he sometimes failed from an exuberance of manner, and dissipated the impression of the character by the variety of his resources. To be perfect his delineation of it should have a little more solidity, depth, sustained and impassioned feeling, with somewhat less brilliancy, with fewer glancing lights, pointed transitions, and pantomimic evolutions.

The Richard of Shakspeare is towering and lofty; equally impetuous and commanding; haughty, violent, and subtle; bold and treacherous; confident in his strength as well as in his cunning; raised high by his birth, and higher by his genius and his crimes; a royal usurper, a princely hypocrite, a tyrant and a murderer of the house of Plantagenet.

"But I was born so high:
Our aery buildeth in the cedar's top,
And dallies with the wind, and scorns the sun."

The idea conveyed in these lines (which are indeed omitted in the miserable medley acted for RICHARD III.) is never lost sight of by Shakespear, and should not be out of the actor's mind for a moment. The restless and sanguinary Richard is not a man striving to be great, but to be greater than he is; conscious of his strength of will, his power of intellect, his daring courage, his elevated station; and making use of these advantages as giving him both the means and the pretext to commit unheard-of crimes, and to shield himself from remorse and infamy.

If Mr. Kean does not entirely succeed in concentrating all the lines of the character as drawn by Shakespear, he gives an animation, vigour, and relief to the part which we have never seen surpassed. He is more refined than Cooke; more bold, varied, and original than Kemble in the same character. In some parts, however, we thought him deficient in dignity, and particularly in the scenes of state business, he has by no means an air of artificial authority. There is at times an aspiring elevation, an enthusiastic rapture in his expectations of attaining the crown, and at others a gloating expression of sudden delight, as if he were already enfolded [illegible]

[illegible] Mr

Kean's attitude in leaning against the side of the stage before he comes forward to address Lady Anne, is one of the most graceful and striking ever witnessed on the stage. It would have done for Titian to paint. The frequent and rapid transition of his voice from the expression of the fiercest passion to the most familiar tones of conversation was that which gave a peculiar grace of novelty to his acting on his first appearance. This has been since imitated and caricatured by others, and he himself uses the artifice more sparingly than he did. His bye-play is excellent. His manner of bidding his friends "Good night," after pausing with the point of his sword, drawn slowly backward and forward on the ground, as if considering the plan of the battle next day, is a particularly happy and natural thought. He gives to the two last acts of the play the greatest animation and effect. He fills every part of the stage; and makes up for the deficiency of his person by what has been sometimes objected to as an excess of action. The concluding scene, in which he is killed by Richmond, is the most brilliant of the whole. He fights at last like one drunk with wounds; and the attitude in which he stands with his hands stretched out, after his sword is wrested from him, has a preternatural and terrific grandeur, as if his will could not be disarmed, and the very phantoms of his despair had withering power to kill.—Mr. Kean has since in a great measure effaced the impression of his Richard III. by the superior efforts of his genius in Othello (his master-piece), in the murder-scene in Macbeth, in Richard II., in Sir Giles Overreach, and lastly in Oroonoko; but we still like to look back to his first performance of this part, both because it first assured his admirers of his future success, and because we bore our feeble but, at that time, not useless testimony to the merits of this very original actor, on which the town was considerably divided for no other reason than because they *were* original.

The manner in which Shakspeare's plays have been generally altered or rather mangled by modern mechanists, is a disgrace to the English stage. The patch-work RICHARD III. which is acted under the sanction of his name, and which was manufactured by Cibber, is a striking example of this remark.

The play itself is undoubtedly a very powerful effusion of

Shakspeare's genius. The ground-work of the character of Richard, that mixture of intellectual vigour with moral depravity, in which Shakspeare delighted to show his strength, gave full scope as well as temptation to the exercise of his imagination. The character of his hero is almost everywhere predominant, and marks its lurid track throughout. The original play is however too long for representation, and there are some few scenes which might be better spared than preserved, and by omitting which it would remain a complete whole. The only rule, indeed, for altering Shakspeare is to retrench certain passages which may be considered either as superfluous or obsolete, but not to add or transpose anything. The arrangement and development of the story, and the mutual contrast and combination of the dramatis personae, are in general as finely managed as the development of the characters or the expression of the passions.

This rule has not been adhered to in the present instance. Some of the most important and striking passages in the principal character have been omitted, to make room for idle and misplaced extracts from other plays; the only intention of which seems to have been to make the character of Richard as odious and disgusting as possible. It is apparently for no other purpose than to make Gloster stab King Henry on the stage, that the fine abrupt introduction of the character in the opening of the play is lost in the tedious whining morality of the uxorious king (taken from another play);—we say tedious, because it interrupts the business of the scene, and loses its beauty and effect by having no intelligible connection with the previous character of the mild, well-meaning monarch. The passages which the unfortunate Henry has to recite are beautiful and pathetic in themselves, but they have nothing to do with the world that Richard has to "bustle in." In the same spirit of vulgar caricature is the scene between Richard and Lady Anne (when his wife) interpolated without any authority, merely to gratify this favourite propensity to disgust and loathing. With the same perverse consistency, Richard, after his last fatal struggle, is raised up by some Galvanic process, to utter the imprecation, without any motive but pure malignity, which Shakspeare has so properly put into the mouth of Northumberland on hearing of Percy's

death. To make room for these worse than needless additions, many of the most striking passages in the real play have been omitted by the foppery and ignorance of the prompt-book critics. We do not mean to insist merely on passages which are fine as poetry and to the reader, such as Clarence's dream, &c., but on those which are important to the understanding of the character, and peculiarly adapted for stage effect. We will give the following as instances among several others. The first is the scene where Richard enters abruptly to the queen and her friends to defend himself:—

"GLOUCESTER. They do me wrong, and I will not endure it
Who are they that complain unto the king,
That I forsooth am stern, and love them not?
By holy Paul, they love his grace but lightly,
That fill his ears with such dissensious rumors:
Because I cannot flatter and look fair,
Smile in men's faces, smooth, deceive, and cog,
Duck with French nods, and apish courtesy,
I must be held a rancorous enemy.
Cannot a plain man live, and think no harm,
But thus his simple truth must be abus'd
With silken, sly, insinuating Jacks?
GRAY. To whom in all this presence speaks your grace?
GLOUCESTER. To thee, that hast nor honesty nor grace?
When have I injur'd thee, when done thee wrong?
Or thee? or thee? or any of your faction?
A plague upon you all!"

Nothing can be more characteristic than the turbulent pretensions to meekness and simplicity in this address. Again, the versatility and adroitness of Richard is admirably described in the following ironical conversation with Brakenbury:—

"BRAKENBURY. I beseech your graces both to pardon me.
His Majesty hath straitly given in charge,
That no man shall have private conference,
Of what degree soever, with your brother.
GLOUCESTER. E'en so, and please your worship, Brakenbury,
You may partake of anything we say:
We speak no treason, man—we say the king
Is wise and virtuous, and his noble queen
Well stroke in years, fair, and not jealous.
We say that Shore's wife hath a pretty foot,

> A cherry lip, [illegible] tongue;
> That the queen's kindred are made gentlefolks,
> How say you, sir? Can you deny all this?
>
> BRAKENBURY. With this, my lord, myself have nought to do.
>
> GLOUCESTER. Naught to do with mistress Shore? I tell thee, fellow, he that doth naught with her,
> Excepting one, were best to do it secretly, alone.
>
> BRAKENBURY. What one, my lord?
>
> GLOUCESTER. Her husband, knave — wouldst thou betray me?"

The feigned reconciliation of Gloucester with the queen's kinsmen is also a master-piece. One of the finest strokes in the piece, and which serves to show as much as anything the deep, plausible manners of Richard, is the unsuspecting security of Hastings, at the very time when the former is plotting his death, and when that very appearance of cordiality and good humour [illegible] from Richard's consciousness of having betrayed him [illegible]. This, with the whole character of Hastings, is omitted.

Perhaps the two most beautiful passages in the original play are the farewell apostrophe of the queen to the Tower, where the children are shut up from her, and Tyrrel's description of their death. We will finish our quotations with them.

> [illegible] the Tower,
> [illegible]

The other passage is the account of their death by Tyrrel:—

> [illegible]

Which once, quoth Forrest, almost changed my mind,
But oh the devil!—there the villain stopped;
When Dighton thus told on—we smothered
The most replenished sweet work of nature,
That from the prime creation e'er she framed."

These are some of those wonderful bursts of feeling, done to the life, to the very height of fancy and nature, which our Shakspeare alone could give. We do not insist on the repetition of these last passages as proper for the stage: we should indeed be loth to trust them in the mouth of almost any actor: but we should wish them to be retained in preference at least to the fantoccini exhibition of the young princes, Edward and York, bandying childish wit with their uncle.

The introduction of the ghosts through the trap-doors of the stage should be altogether omitted. The speeches which they address to Richard might be delivered just as well from behind the scenes. These sort of exhibitions might have been very proper for a superstitious age, but in an age not superstitious they excite ridicule instead of terror.

HENRY VIII.

This play contains little action or violence of passion, yet it has a historical interest of a more noble and thoughtful cast, and some of the most striking passages in the author's works. The character of Queen Katherine is the most perfect delineation of that mixture of dignity, sweetness, and resignation that can be conceived. He appeals to the protection of the king, her remonstrances to the cardinals, her conversations with her women, show a mind and temper finely accompanied with the utmost gentleness of nature. What can be more affecting than her answer to Campeius and Wolsey, who come to visit her as pretended friends?

> "Not to me he speaks.
> I know my state: both your plots and wiles
> Have undone me: O, you are mighty lords,
> Too hard for me to struggle with!"

Dr. Johnson observes of this play, that "the meek sorrows and virtuous dignity of Katherine have touched scarce any heart, which they have not softened: yet many hearts must be melted before the power of Shakspeare can be felt to its full extent. But the genius of Shakspeare comes in and gives it all to Katherine. Every other part may be easily conceived and easily written." This is easy said; but with all the advantages of an historical authority as great as that of Johnson, the character of Buckingham, finely as it is conceived, is not half so affecting and natural as Shakspeare, and even Wolsey, with all the splendour of his fortune, and the insolence of his pride, is not half so interesting, as he is when he falls, and when we see the nothingness of

effect, a pathos, which only the genius of Shakspeare could lend to the distresses of a proud, bad man, like Wolsey. There is a sort of child-like simplicity in the very helplessness of his situation, arising from the recollection of his past overbearing ambition. After the cutting sarcasms of his enemies, on his disgrace, against which he bears up with a spirit conscious of his own superiority, he breaks out into that fine apostrophe—

> "Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness!
> This is the state of man; to-day he puts forth
> The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms,
> And bears his blushing honors thick upon him;
> The third day comes a frost, a killing frost;
> And—when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
> His greatness is a ripening—nips his root,
> And then he falls, as I do. I have ventur'd,
> Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
> These many summers in a sea of glory;
> But far beyond my depth: my high-blown pride
> At length broke under me; and now has left me,
> Weary and old with service, to the mercy
> Of a rude stream, that must for ever hide me.
> Vain pomp and glory of the world, I hate ye!
> I feel my heart now open'd: O how wretched
> Is that poor man, that hangs on princes' favors!
> There is betwixt that smile we would aspire to,
> That sweet aspect of princes, and our ruin,
> More pangs and fears than war and women have;
> And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
> Never to hope again!"

There is in this passage, as well as in the well-known dialogue with Cromwell which follows, something which stretches beyond common-place; nor is the account which Griffiths gives of Wolsey's death less Shakspearian; and the candor with which Queen Katherine listens to the praise of "him whom of all men while living she hated most" adds the last graceful finishing to her character.

Among other images of great individual beauty might be mentioned the description of the effect of Ann Boleyn's presenting herself to the crowd at her coronation.

——— "We [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] What a noise he [illegible]
Is the sky is made at so much stuff to frost,
As [illegible] and to as many tones."

The character of Henry VIII. is drawn with great truth and spirit. It is like a very disagreeable portrait, sketched by the hand of a master. His gross appearance, his blustering demeanour, his vulgarity, his arrogance, his sensuality, his cruelty, and hypocrisy, his want of common honesty and common humanity, are marked in strong lines. His natural pride and impatience of opposition compose the tenor of the piece. The only expressions which are at all above the ordinary tone of conversation are those in which he compares himself to a thunder-cloud. He is of all the characters in the play the most free from affectation or disguise. He is the only one who always speaks his mind, and the words come from him as they would from a common man. Other kings in Shakespeare, Richard III. for instance, are tyrants from system and calculation. Henry VIII. is a tyrant from humour and constitution. He has no occasion to dissemble his real character, for he is the only person who is not afraid of it. He is the only one who is not a hypocrite. He is a character by himself, and for himself. He is not a man of intrigue, but of violence. He is not a man of refinement, but of brutality. He is not a man of power, but of will. He is not a man of genius, but of nature. He is not a man of virtue, but of vice. He is not a man of religion, but of superstition. He is not a man of learning, but of ignorance. He is not a man of taste, but of coarseness. He is not a man of feeling, but of insensibility. He is not a man of conscience, but of cruelty. He is not a man of honour, but of dishonour. He is not a man of truth, but of falsehood. He is not a man of justice, but of injustice. He is not a man of mercy, but of severity. He is not a man of peace, but of war. He is not a man of love, but of hatred. He is not a man of hope, but of despair. He is not a man of faith, but of unbelief. He is not a man of charity, but of uncharitableness. He is not a man of humility, but of pride. He is not a man of meekness, but of wrath. He is not a man of patience, but of impatience. He is not a man of temperance, but of intemperance. He is not a man of chastity, but of lust. He is not a man of gentleness, but of violence. He is not a man of goodness, but of wickedness. He is not a man of righteousness, but of unrighteousness. He is not a man of holiness, but of unholiness. He is not a man of godliness, but of ungodliness. He is not a man of piety, but of impiety. He is not a man of reverence, but of irreverence. He is not a man of fear, but of boldness. He is not a man of trembling, but of presumption. He is not a man of humbleness, but of haughtiness. He is not a man of lowliness, but of loftiness. He is not a man of meekness, but of arrogance. He is not a man of gentleness, but of harshness. He is not a man of kindness, but of unkindness. He is not a man of tenderness, but of hardness. He is not a man of compassion, but of cruelty. He is not a man of mercy, but of severity. He is not a man of forgiveness, but of revenge. He is not a man of reconciliation, but of enmity. He is not a man of peace, but of strife. He is not a man of unity, but of division. He is not a man of harmony, but of discord. He is not a man of concord, but of contention. He is not a man of agreement, but of disagreement. He is not a man of consent, but of dissent. He is not a man of assent, but of refusal. He is not a man of acceptance, but of rejection. He is not a man of approval, but of disapproval. He is not a man of praise, but of blame. He is not a man of commendation, but of censure. He is not a man of applause, but of condemnation. He is not a man of admiration, but of contempt. He is not a man of esteem, but of disdain. He is not a man of respect, but of disrespect. He is not a man of honour, but of dishonour. He is not a man of reverence, but of irreverence. He is not a man of veneration, but of irreverence. He is not a man of worship, but of idolatry. He is not a man of devotion, but of profanity. He is not a man of piety, but of impiety. He is not a man of godliness, but of ungodliness. He is not a man of holiness, but of unholiness. He is not a man of righteousness, but of unrighteousness. He is not a man of goodness, but of wickedness. He is not a man of virtue, but of vice. He is not a man of chastity, but of lust. He is not a man of temperance, but of intemperance. He is not a man of patience, but of impatience. He is not a man of meekness, but of wrath. He is not a man of humility, but of pride. He is not a man of charity, but of uncharitableness. He is not a man of faith, but of unbelief. He is not a man of hope, but of despair. He is not a man of love, but of hatred. He is not a man of peace, but of war. He is not a man of mercy, but of severity. 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near such a man." It might with as good reason be said—"No king could live near such a man." His eye would have penetrated through the pomp of circumstances and veil of opinion. As it is, he has represented such a person to the life—his plays are in this respect the glass of history—he has done them the same justice as if he had been a privy councillor all his life, and in each successive reign. Kings ought never to be seen upon the stage. In the abstract, they are very disagreeable characters: it is only while living that they are "the best of kings." It is their power, their splendor, it is the apprehension of the personal consequences of their favor or their hatred, that dazzles the imagination and suspends the judgment of their favorites or their vassals; but death cancels the bond of allegiance and of interest; and seen *as they were*, their power and their pretensions look monstrous and ridiculous. The charge brought against modern philosophy as inimical to loyalty is unjust, because it might as well be brought against other things. No reader of history can be a lover of kings. We have often wondered that Henry VIII., as he is drawn by Shakspeare, and as we have seen him represented in all the bloated deformity of mind and person, is not hooted from the English stage.

KING JOHN.

KING JOHN is the last of the historical plays we shall have to speak of; and we are not sorry that it is. If we are to indulge our imaginations, we had rather do it upon an imaginary theme; if we are to find subjects for the exercise of our pity and terror, we prefer seeking them in fictitious danger and fictitious distress. It gives a soreness to our feelings of indignation or sympathy, when we know that in tracing the progress of sufferings and crimes, we are treading upon real ground, and recollect that the poet's "dream" *denoted a foregone conclusion*—irrevocable ills, not conjured up by the fancy, but placed beyond the reach of poetical justice. That the treachery of King John, the death of Arthur, the grief of Constance, had a real truth in history, sharpens the sense of pain, while it hangs a leaden weight on the heart and the imagination. Something whispers us that we have no right to make a mock of calamities like these, or to turn the truth of things into the puppet and plaything of our fancies. "To consider thus" may be "to consider too curiously;" but still we think that the actual truth of the particular events, in proportion as we are conscious of it, is a drawback on the pleasure as well as the dignity of tragedy.

King John has all the beauties of language and all the richness of the imagination to relieve the painfulness of the subject. The character of King John himself is kept pretty much in the background; it is only marked in by comparatively slight indications. The crimes he is tempted to commit are such as are thrust upon him rather by circumstances and opportunity than of his own seeking: he is here represented as more cowardly than cruel, and as more contemptible than odious. The play embraces only a part of his history. There are, however, a few

characters on the stage that excite more disgust and loathing. He has no intellectual grandeur or strength of character to shield him from the indignation which his immediate conduct provokes: he stands naked and defenceless, in that respect, to the worst we can think of him: and besides, we are impelled to put the very worst construction on his meanness and cruelty by the tender picture of the beauty and helplessness of the object of it, as well as by the frantic and heart-rending pleadings of maternal despair. We do not forgive him the death of Arthur because he had too late revoked his doom and tried to prevent it, and perhaps because he has himself repented of his black design, our *moral sense* gains courage to hate him the more for it. We take him at his word, and think his purposes must be odious indeed, when he himself shrinks back from them. The scene in which King John suggests to Hubert the design of murdering his nephew, is a master-piece of dramatic skill, but it is still inferior, very inferior to the scene between Hubert and Arthur, when the latter learns the orders to put out his eyes. If anything ever was penned, heart-piercing, mixing the extremes of terror and pity, of that which shocks and that which soothes the mind, it is this scene.

Arthur's death afterwards, when he throws himself from his prison walls, excites the utmost pity for his innocence and friendless situation, and well justifies the exaggerated denunciations of Falconbridge to Hubert, whom he suspects wrongfully of the deed.

> "There is not yet so ugly a fiend of hell
> As thou shalt be, if thou did'st kill this child.
> —If thou did'st but consent
> To this most cruel act, do but despair:
> And if thou want'st a cord, the smallest thread
> That ever spider twisted from her womb
> Will strangle thee: a rush will be a beam
> To hang thee on: or would'st thou drown thyself,
> Put but a little water in a spoon,
> And it shall be as all the ocean,
> Enough to stifle such a villain up."

The excess of maternal tenderness, rendered desperate by the

ficklenesse of friends and the injustice of fortune, and made stronger in will, in proportion to the want of all other power, was never more finely expressed than in Constance. The dignity of her answer to King Philip, when she refuses to accompany his messenger, "To me and to the state of my great grief," is nobly assumable," her indignant reproach to Austria for closeting her enemy, her invocation to death, "that hast of misery," however fine and spirited, all yield to the beauty of the passage, where, by a gradual subsiding into tenderness, she addresses the Cardinal in these words:—

[illegible]

The [illegible] of Queen Katherine [illegible]

wardness in action, are unbounded. *Aliquando sufflaminandus erat*, says Ben Jonson of Shakspeare. But we should be sorry if Ben Jonson had been his licenser. We prefer the heedless magnanimity of his wit infinitely to all Jonson's laborious caution. The character of the Bastard's comic humor is the same in essence as that of other comic characters in Shakspeare; they always run on with good things, and are never exhausted; they are always daring and successful. They have words at will and a flow of wit, like a flow of animal spirits. The difference between Falconbridge and the others is that he is a soldier, and brings his wit to bear upon action, is courageous with his sword as well as tongue, and stimulates his gallantry by his jokes, his enemies feeling the sharpness of his blows and the sting of his sarcasms at the same time. Among his happiest sallies are his descanting on the composition of his own person, his invective against "commodity, tickling commodity," and his expression of contempt for the Archduke of Austria, who had killed his father, which begins in jest but ends in serious earnest. His conduct at the siege of Angiers shows that his resources were not confined to verbal retorts. The same exposure of the policy of courts and camps, of kings, nobles, priests, and cardinals, takes place here as in the other plays we have gone through, and we shall not go into a disgusting repetition.

This, like the other plays taken from English history, is written in a remarkably smooth and flowing style, very different from some of the tragedies—*Macbeth*, for instance. The passages consist of a series of single lines, not running into one another. This peculiarity in the versification, which is most common in the three parts of *Henry VI.*, has been assigned as a reason why those plays were not written by Shakspeare. But the same structure of verse occurs in his other undoubted plays, as in *Richard II.* and in *King John*. The following are instances:—

> "That daughter there of Spain, the lady Blanch,
> Is near to England; look upon the years
> Of Lewis the dauphin, and that lovely maid.
> If lusty love should go in quest of beauty,
> Where should he find it fairer than in Blanch?
> If zealous love should go in search of virtue,
> Where should he find it purer than in Blanch?

If love calculates aught a match of birth,
Whose veins bound richer blood than lady Blanch?
Such as she is, in beauty, virtue, birth,
Is the young Dauphin every way complete:
If not complete of, say he is not she;
And she again wants nothing, to name want,
If want it be not, that she is not he:
He is the half part of a blessed man,
Left to be finished by such as she;
And she a fair divided excellence,
Whose fulness of perfection lies in him.
O, two such silver currents, when they join,
Do glorify the banks that bound them in:
And two such shores to two such streams made one,
Two such controlling bounds, shall you be, kings,
To these two princes, if you marry them.

Another distinction, which is certainly very happy as an example of the simple enumeration of a number of particulars, is Salisbury's remonstrance against the second crowning of the king.

O call back yesterday, bid time return,
And thou shalt have twelve thousand fighting men!
To-day, to-day, unhappy day, too late,
O'erthrows thy joys, friends, fortune, and the crown.
For many a thousand widows shall this day
Keep safe their husbands from the fields of France,
And many a mother's hope, and many a maid,
Shall not be made a wife, a mother, hope,
But must lament, ere they can make them so,
Their sons, their husbands, and their fortunes slain.
A fairer morning never saw the sun,
Nor brighter day, till this accursed hour.
Is wasted, and fulfilled, and ended."

TWELFTH NIGHT; OR, WHAT YOU WILL.

THIS is justly considered as one of the most delightful of Shakspeare's comedies. It is full of sweetness and pleasantry. It is perhaps too good-natured for comedy. It has little satire, and no spleen. It aims at the ludicrous rather than the ridiculous. It makes us laugh at the follies of mankind, not despise them, and still less bear any ill-will towards them. Shakspeare's comic genius resembles the bee rather in its power of extracting sweets from weeds or poisons, than in leaving a sting behind it. He gives the most amusing exaggeration of the prevailing foibles of his characters, but in a way that they themselves, instead of being offended at, would almost join in to humor; he rather contrives opportunities for them to show themselves off in the happiest lights, than renders them contemptible in the perverse construction of the wit or malice of others. There is a certain stage of society in which people become conscious of their peculiarities and absurdities, affect to disguise what they are, and set up pretensions to what they are not. This gives rise to a corresponding style of comedy, the object of which is to detect the disguises of self-love, and to make reprisals on these preposterous assumptions of vanity, by marking the contrast between the real and the affected character as severely as possible, and denying to those who would impose on us for what they are not, even the merit which they have. This is the comedy of artificial life, of wit and satire, such as we see it in Congreve, Wycherley, Vanbrugh, &c. To this succeeds a state of society from which the same sort of affectation and pretence are banished by a greater knowledge of the world or by their successful exposure on the stage; and which by neutralising the materials

of comic character, both natural and artificial, leaves no comedy at all—but *the sentimental*. Such is our modern comedy. There is a period in the progress of manners anterior to both these, in which the foibles and follies of individuals are of nature's planting, not the growth of art or study; in which they are therefore unconscious of them themselves, or care not who knows them, if they can but have their whim out; and in which, as there is no attempt at imposition, the spectators rather receive pleasure from humoring the inclinations of the persons they laugh at, than wish to give them pain by exposing their absurdity. This may be called the comedy of nature, and it is the comedy which we generally find in Shakspeare. Whether the analysis here given be just or not, the spirit of his comedies is evidently quite distinct from that of the authors above mentioned, as it is in its essence the same with that of Cervantes, and also very frequently of Molière, though he was more systematic in his extravagance than Shakspeare. Shakspeare's comedy is of a pastoral and poetical cast. Folly is indigenous to the soil, and shoots out with native, happy, unchecked luxuriance. Absurdity has every encouragement afforded it; and nonsense has room to flourish in. Nothing is stunted by the churlish, icy hand of indifference or severity. The poet runs riot in a conceit, and idolizes a quibble. His whole object is to turn the meanest or rudest objects to a pleasurable account. The relish which he has of a pun, or of the quaint humor of a low character, does not interfere with the delight with which he describes a beautiful image, or the most refined love. The clown's forced jests do not spoil the sweetness of the character of Viola; the same house is big enough to hold Malvolio, the Countess, Maria, Sir Toby, and Sir Andrew Ague-cheek. For instance, nothing can fall much lower than this last character in intellect or morals: yet how are his weaknesses nursed and dandled by Sir Toby into something "high fantastical," when on Sir Andrew's commendation of himself for dancing and fencing, Sir Toby answers—"Wherefore are these things hid? Wherefore have these gifts a curtain before them? Are they like to take dust like Mistress Moll's picture? Why dost thou not go to church in a galliard, and come home in a coranto? My very walk should be a jig!

What dost thou mean? Is this a world to hide virtues in? I did think by the excellent constitution of thy leg, it was framed under the star of a galliard!" How Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, and the Clown afterwards *chirp over their cups*, how they "rouse the night-owl in a catch, able to draw three souls out of one weaver?" What can be better than Sir Toby's unanswerable answer to Malvolio, "Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?"—In a word, the best turn is given to everything, instead of the worst. There is a constant infusion of the romantic and enthusiastic, in proportion as the characters are natural and sincere; whereas, in the more artificial style of comedy, everything gives way to ridicule and indifference, there being nothing left but affectation on one side, and incredulity on the other. Much as we like Shakspeare's comedies, we cannot agree with Dr. Johnson that they are better than his tragedies; nor do we like them half so well If his inclination to comedy sometimes led him to trifle with the seriousness of tragedy, the poetical and impassioned passages are the best parts of his comedies. The great and secret charm of TWELFTH NIGHT is the character of Viola. Much as we think of catches and cakes and ale, there is something that we like better. We have a friendship for Sir Toby; we patronise Sir Andrew; we have an understanding with the Clown, a sneaking kindness for Maria and her rogueries; we feel a regard for Malvolio, and sympathize with his gravity, his smiles, his cross garters, his yellow stockings, and imprisonment in the stocks. But there is something that excites in us a stronger feeling than all this—it is Viola's confession of her love.

"DUKE. What's her history?
VIOLA. *A blank, my lord, she never told her love*
She let concealment, like a worm i' th' bud,
Feed on her damask cheek; she pin'd in thought,
And with a green and yellow melancholy
She sat like patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief. *Was not this love indeed?*
We men may say more, swear more, but indeed,
Our shows are more than will; for still we prove
Much in our vows, but little in our love.
DUKE. But died thy sister of her love, my boy?

> VIOLA. I left all the daughters of my father's house,
> And all brothers too—and yet I know not."—

Shakespeare alone could describe the effect of his own poetry.

> "O, it came o'er the ear like the sweet south
> That breathes upon a bank of violets,
> Stealing and giving odour."

What we so much admire here is not the image of Patience on a monument, which has been generally quoted, but the lines before and after it. "They give a very echo to the seat where love is throned." How long ago it is since we first learnt to repeat them; and still, still they vibrate on the heart, like the sounds which the passing wind draws from the trembling strings of a harp! What [illegible] passages of [illegible] sweetness. Such is Olivia's address to Sebastian, whom she supposes to have already deceived her in a promise of marriage.

> "[illegible] I [illegible] well,
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> *I [illegible] and [illegible] soul*
> *[illegible]*"

We have already said something of Shakspeare's songs. One of the most beautiful of them occurs in this play, with a preface of [illegible].

> "[illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible],
> [illegible] with bones,
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]

SONG.

> [illegible],
> [illegible],

Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O prepare it;
My part of death no one so true
Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strewn;
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown:
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O! where
Sad true love never find my grave,
To weep there."

Who after this will say that Shakspeare's genius was only fitted for comedy? Yet after reading other parts of this play, and particularly the garden-scene where Malvolio picks up the letter, if we were to say that his genius for comedy was less than his genius for tragedy, it would perhaps only prove that our own taste in such matters is more saturnine than mercurial.

"*Enter* MARIA.

SIR TOBY. Here comes the little villain:—How now, my nettle of India?

MARIA. Get ye all three into the box-tree: Malvolio's coming down this walk: he has been yonder i' the sun, practising behavior to his own shadow this half hour: observe him, for the love of mockery; for I know this letter will make a contemplative idiot of him. Close, in the name of jesting! Lie thou there; for here comes the trout that must be caught with tickling.

[*They hide themselves.* MARIA *throws down a letter, and Exit.*]

Enter MALVOLIO.

MALVOLIO Tis but fortune; all is fortune. Maria once told me she did affect me; and I have heard herself come thus near, that, should she fancy, it should be one of my complexion. Besides, she uses me with a more exalted respect than any one else that follows her. What should I think on 't?

SIR TOBY. Here's an over-weening rogue!

FABIAN. O, peace! Contemplation makes a rare turkeycock of him: how he jets under his advanced plumes!

SIR ANDREW. 'Slight, I could so beat the rogue:—

[illegible]

MAL. [illegible] Malvolio;—

SIR TOBY. Ah, rogue!

SIR ANDREW. [illegible], pistol him.

[illegible]

MAL. [illegible] the lady of the Strachy married [illegible]

[illegible]

MAL. [illegible] three months married to her, sitting in my [illegible],—

[illegible]

[illegible] velvet gown; [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] justice

is done in the uneasiness which Olivia suffers on account of her mistaken attachment to Cesario, as her insensibility to the violence of the Duke's passion is atoned for by the discovery of Viola's concealed love of him.

THE

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

This is little more than the first outlines of a comedy loosely sketched in. It is the story of a novel dramatised with very little labour or pretension; yet there are passages of high poetical spirit, and of inimitable quaintness of humour, which are undoubtedly Shakespear's, and there is throughout the conduct of the fable a careless grace and felicity which marks it for his. One of the editors (we believe Mr. Pope) remarks in a marginal note to the Two Gentlemen of Verona—"It is observable (I know not for what cause) that the style of this comedy is less figurative, and more natural and unaffected than the greater part of this author's, though supposed to be one of the first he wrote." Yet so little does the editor appear to have made up his mind upon this subject, that we find the following note to the very next (the second) scene. "This whole scene, like many others in these plays (some of which I believe were written by Shakespear, and others interpolated by the players) is composed of the lowest and most trifling conceits, to be accounted for only by the gross taste of the age he lived in; *Populo ut placerent.* I wish I had authority to leave them out, but I have done all I could, set a mark of reprobation upon them, throughout this edition." It is strange that our fastidious critic should fall so soon from praising to reprobating. The style of the familiar parts of this comedy is indeed made up of conceits—low they may be for what we know, but then they are not poor, but rich ones. The scene of Launce with his dog (not that in the second, but that in the fourth act) is a perfect treat in the way of

farcical drollery and invention; nor do we think Speed's manner of proving his master to be in love deficient in wit or sense, though the style may be criticised as not simple enough for the modern taste.

"VALENTINE. Why, how know you that I am in love?

SPEED. Marry, by these special marks: first, you have learned, like Sir Protheus, to wreathe your arms like a malcontent, to relish a love-song like a robin-red-breast, to walk alone like one that had the pestilence, to sigh like a school-boy that had lost his A B C, to weep like a young wench that had lost her grandam, to fast like one that takes diet, to watch like one that fears robbing, to speak puling like a beggar at Hallowmas. You were wont, when you laughed, to crow like a cock; when you walked, to walk like one of the lions; when you fasted, it was presently after dinner; when you looked sadly, it was for want of money; and now you are metamorphosed with a mistress that when I look on you, I can hardly think you my master."

The tender scenes in this play, though not so highly wrought as in some others, have often much sweetness of sentiment and expression. There is something pretty and playful in the conversation of Julia with her maid, when she shows such a disposition to coquetry about receiving the letter from Protheus; and her behavior afterwards and her disappointment, when she finds him faithless to his vows, remind us at a distance of Imogen's tender constancy. Her answer to Lucetta, who advises her against following her lover in disguise, is a beautiful piece of poetry.

"LUCETTA. I do not seek to quench your love's hot fire,
But qualify the fire's extremest rage,
Lest it should burn above the bounds of reason.
JULIA. The more thou damm'st it up, the more it burns;
The current that with gentle murmur glides,
Thou know'st, being stopp'd, impatiently doth rage;
But when his fair course is not hindered,
He makes sweet music with th' enamell'd stones,
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage.
And so by many winding nooks he strays,
With willing sport, to the wild ocean.
Then let me go, and hinder not my course;
I'll be as patient as a gentle stream,

> And make a [illegible]
> Till [illegible]
> And [illegible]
> And [illegible]

If Shakspeare indeed had written only this and other passages in the TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA, he would *almost* have deserved Milton's praise of him—

> And sweetest Shakspeare, Fancy's child,
> Warble his native wood-notes wild

But as it is, he deserves rather more praise than this.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

This is a play that in spite of the change of manners and of prejudices still holds undisputed possession of the stage. Shakspeare's malignant has outlived Mr. Cumberland's benevolent Jew. In proportion as Shylock has ceased to be a popular bugbear, "baited with the rabble's curse," he becomes a half-favorite with the philosophical part of the audience, who are disposed to think that Jewish revenge is at least as good as Christian injuries. Shylock is *a good hater;* "a man no less sinned against than sinning." If he carries his revenge too far, yet he has strong grounds for "the lodged hate he bears Anthonio," which he explains with equal force of eloquence and reason. He seems the depositary of the vengeance of his race; and though the long habit of brooding over daily insults and injuries has crusted over his temper with inveterate misanthropy, and hardened him against the contempt of mankind, this adds but little to the triumphant pretensions of his enemies. There is a strong, quick, and deep sense of justice mixed up with the gall and bitterness of his resentment. The constant apprehension of being burnt alive, plundered, banished, reviled and trampled on, might be supposed to sour the most forbearing nature, and to take something from that "milk of human kindness," with which his persecutors contemplated his indignities. The desire of revenge is almost inseparable from the sense of wrong; and we can hardly help sympathizing with the proud spirit, hid beneath his "Jewish gaberdine," stung to madness by repeated undeserved provocations, and laboring to throw off the load of obloquy and oppression heaped upon him and all his tribe by

one desperate act of "lawful" revenge, till the ferociousness of the means by which he is to execute his purpose, and the pertinacity with which he adheres to it, turn us against him; but even at last, when disappointed of the sanguinary revenge with which he had glutted his hopes, and exposed to beggary and contempt by the letter of the law on which he had insisted with so little remorse, we pity him and think him hardly dealt with by his judges. In all his answers and retorts upon his adversaries, he has the best not only of the argument but of the question, reasoning on their own principles and practice. They are so far from allowing of any measure of equal dealing, of common justice or humanity between themselves and the Jew, that even when they come to ask a favor of him, and Shylock reminds them that "on such a day they spit upon him, another spurned him, another called him dog, and for these courtesies request he'll lend them so much monies"—Antonio, his old enemy, instead of any acknowledgment of the shrewdness and justice of his remonstrance, which would have been preposterous in a respectable Catholic merchant in those times, threatens him with a repetition of the same treatment—

"I am as like to call thee so again,
To spit on thee again, to spurn thee too."

After this, the appeal to the Jew's mercy, as if there were any common principle of right and wrong between them, is the rankest hypocrisy, or the blindest prejudice; and the Jew's answer to one of Antonio's friends, who asks him what his pound of forfeit flesh is good for, is irresistible—

[illegible] If

we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? why revenge. The villainy you teach me I will execute, and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction."

The whole of the trial-scene, both before and after the entrance of Portia, is a master-piece of dramatic skill. The legal acuteness, the passionate declamations, the sound maxims of jurisprudence, the wit and irony interspersed in it, the fluctuations of hope and fear in the different persons, and the completeness and suddenness of the catastrophe, cannot be surpassed. Shylock, who is his own counsel, defends himself well, and is triumphant on all the general topics that are urged against him, and only fails through a legal flaw. Take the following as an instance:—

> "Shylock. What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?
> You have among you many a purchas'd slave,
> Which, like your asses, and your dogs, and mules,
> You use in abject and in slavish part,
> Because you bought them:—shall I say to you,
> Let them be free, marry them to your heirs?
> Why sweat they under burdens? let their beds
> Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates
> Be season'd with such viands? you will answer,
> The slaves are ours:—so do I answer you:
> The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
> Is dearly bought, is mine, and I will have it:
> If you deny me, fie upon your law!
> There is no force in the decrees of Venice:
> I stand for judgment: answer; shall I have it?"

The keenness of his revenge awakes all his faculties; and he beats back all opposition to his purpose, whether grave or gay, whether of wit or argument, with an equal degree of earnestness and self-possession. His character is displayed as distinctly in other less prominent parts of the play, and we may collect from a few sentences the history of his life—his descent and origin, his thrift and domestic economy, his affection for his daughter, whom he loves next to his wealth, his courtship and his first present to Leah, his wife! "I would not have parted with it" (the ring

which he first gave her?' 'for a wilderness of monkeys!' What a fine Hebraism is implied in this expression!

Portia is not a very great favourite with us; neither are we in love with her maid, Nerissa. Portia has a certain degree of affectation and pedantry about her, which is very unusual in Shakespear's women, but which perhaps was a proper qualification for the office of a 'civil doctor,' which she undertakes and executes so successfully. The speech about Mercy is very well; but there are a thousand finer ones in Shakespear. We do not admire the scene of the caskets; and object entirely to the Black Prince Morocchius. We should like Jessica better if she had not deceived and robbed her father, and Lorenzo, if he had not married a Jewess, though he thinks he has a right to wrong a Jew. The dialogue between this newly-married couple by moonlight, beginning 'On such a night,' &c. is a collection of classical elegancies. Launcelot, the Jew's man, is an honest fellow. The dilemma in which he describes himself placed between his 'conscience and the fiend,' the one of which advises him to run away from his master's service and the other to stay in it, is exquisitely humourous.

Gratiano is a very admirable subordinate character. He is the jester of the piece: yet one speech of his, in his own defence, contains a whole volume of wisdom.

> *Antonio.* I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano,
> A stage, where every man must play a part;
> And mine a sad one.
> *Gratiano.* Let me play the fool:
> With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come;
> And let my liver rather heat with wine,
> Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.
> Why should a man, whose blood is warm within,
> Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?
> Sleep when he wakes? and creep into the jaundice
> By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio—
> I love thee, and it is my love that speaks;—
> There are a sort of men, whose visages
> Do cream and mantle, like a standing pond:
> And do a wilful stillness entertain,
> With purpose to be dress'd in an opinion
> Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;

As who should say, *I am Sir Oracle,*
And when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!
O, my Anthonio, I do know of these,
That therefore only are reputed wise,
For saying nothing; who, I am very sure,
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears,
Which hearing them, would call their brothers, fools.
I'll tell thee more of this another time:
But fish not, with this melancholy bait,
For this fool's gudgeon, this opinion."

Gratiano's speech on the philosophy of love, and the effect of habit in taking off the force of passion, is as full of spirit and good sense. The graceful winding up of this play in the fifth act, after the tragic business is despatched, is one of the happiest instances of Shakspeare's knowledge of the principles of the drama. We do not mean the pretended quarrel between Portia and Nerissa and their husbands about the rings, which is amusing enough, but the conversation just before and after the return of Portia to her own house, beginning, "How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank," and ending "Peace! how the moon sleeps with Endymion and would not be awaked." There is a number of beautiful thoughts crowded into that short space, and linked together by the most natural transitions.

When we first went to see Mr. Kean in Shylock, we expected to see, what we had been used to see, a decrepid old man, bent with age and ugly with mental deformity, grinning with deadly malice, with the venom of his heart congealed in the expression of his countenance, sullen, morose, gloomy, inflexible, brooding over one idea, that of his hatred, and fixed on one unalterable purpose, that of his revenge. We were disappointed, because we had taken our idea from other actors, not from the play. There is no proof there that Shylock is old, but a single line, "Bring me a *curled* Shylock, both stand forth,"—which does not imply that long association with age—and the circumstance that he has a marriageable, which does not imply that he is old himself. It would be too much to say that his body should be made crooked and distorted to answer to his mind, which is bowed down and warped with prejudices and passion. That he has [illegible] true; he has more ideas than any other per-

son in the piece; and if he is intense and inveterate in the pursuit of his purpose, he shows the utmost elasticity, vigor, and presence of mind, in the means of attaining it. But so rooted was our habitual impression of the part from seeing it caricatured in the representation, that it was only from a careful perusal of the play itself that we saw our error. The stage is not in general the best place to study our author's characters in. It is too often filled with traditional common-place conceptions of the part, handed down from sire to son, and suited to the taste of *the great vulgar and the small*.—"'Tis an unweeded garden: things rank and gross do merely gender in it!" If a man of genius comes once in an age to clear away the rubbish, to make it fruitful and wholesome, they cry, "'Tis a bad school: it may be like nature, it may be like Shakspeare, but it is not like us." Admirable critics!

THE WINTER'S TALE.

We wonder that Mr. Pope should have entertained doubts of the genuineness of this play. He was, we suppose, shocked (as a certain critic suggests) at the Chorus, Time, leaping over sixteen years with his crutch between the third and fourth act, and at Antigonus's landing with the infant Perdita on the sea-coast of Bohemia. These slips or blemishes, however, do not prove it not to be Shakspeare's; for he was as likely to fall into them as anybody: but we do not know anybody but himself who could produce the beauties. The *stuff* of which the tragic passion is composed, the romantic sweetness, the comic humor, are evidently his. Even the crabbed and tortuous style of the speeches of Leontes, reasoning on his own jealousy, beset with doubts and fears, and entangled more and more in the thorny labyrinth, bears every mark of Shakspeare's peculiar manner of conveying the painful struggle of different thoughts and feelings, laboring for utterance, and almost strangled in the birth. For instance:—

> "Has not your son,
> Camillo?
> Or is't some proper doubt: you have, or your eye-glass
> Is thicker than a cuckold's horn) or heard?
> [illegible] apparent, rumor
> [illegible] thought (for cogitation
> [illegible] thinks)
> [illegible] will confess,
> [illegible] unpudently negative,
> [illegible] eyes, ne'rs, nor thought."

Here Leontes is confounded with his passion, and does not know which way to turn himself, to give words to the anguish, rage, and apprehension, which tug at his breast. It is only as

he is worked up into a clearer conviction of his wrongs by insisting on the grounds of his unjust suspicions to Camillo, who irritates him by his opposition, that he bursts out into the following vehement strain of bitter indignation: yet even here his passion staggers, and is as it were oppressed with its own intensity.

> "Is whispering nothing?
> Is leaning cheek to cheek? is meeting noses?
> Kissing with inside lip? stopping the career
> Of laughter with a sigh? (a note infallible
> Of breaking honesty) horsing foot on foot?
> Skulking in corners? wishing clocks more swift?
> Hours, minutes? noon, midnight? and all eyes
> Blind with the pin and web, but theirs, theirs only,
> That would unseen be wicked? is this nothing?
> Why, then the world and all that's in't, is nothing,
> The covering sky is nothing, Bohemia nothing,
> My wife is nothing."

The character of Hermione is as much distinguished by its sanctity of reputation and patient forbearance, as that of Paulina is by her zealous and spirited remonstrances against the injustice done to the queen, and by her devoted attachment to her misfortunes. Hermione's restoration to her husband and her child, after the mystery of fifteen years, is as affecting as any incident of the kind can be in representation. Camillo, and the old shepherd and his son, are characters of humour and interesting instruments in the progress of the plot, and though last, not least, comes Autolycus, a very pleasant, thievish rogue: and what is the best of him, a character of cheerfulness, who escapes with impunity to the end.

The Winter's Tale is one of the best acting of our author's plays. We remember seeing it with great pleasure many years ago. It was on the night that King took leave of the stage, when he and Mrs. Jordan played together in the after-piece of the Wedding Day. Nothing could go off with more spirit, and greater air of effect. Mrs. Siddons played Hermione, and in the trial scene, and the general style of the Queen, was worthy of herself, dignified and impressive. Mr. Kemble in Leontes worked himself up into a very fine classical

phrenzy; and Bannister, as Autolycus, roared as loud for pity as a sturdy beggar could do who felt none of the pain he counterfeited, and was sound of wind and limb. We shall never see these parts so acted again; or if we did, it would be in vain. Actors grow old, or no longer surprise us by their novelty. But true poetry, like nature, is always young; and we still read the courtship of Florizel and Perdita, as we welcome the return of spring, with the same feelings as ever.

"Florizel. Thou dearest Perdita,
With these forc'd thoughts, I pr'ythee, darken not
The mirth o' the feast: or I'll be thine, my fair,
Or not my father's: for I cannot be
Mine own, nor any thing to any, if
I be not thine. To this I am most constant,
Though destiny say, no. Be merry, gentle;
Strangle such thoughts as these, with any thing
That you behold the while. Your guests are coming:
Lift up your countenance; as it were the day
Of celebration of that nuptial, which
We two have sworn shall come.
Perdita. O lady fortune,
Stand you auspicious!"

Enter Shepherd, Clown, Mopsa, Dorcas, Servants, with Polixenes and Camillo, disguised.

Florizel. [illegible] approach:
[illegible]
[illegible]

[illegible] old wife liv'd, upon
[illegible]

And bid us welcome to your sheep-shearing,
As your good flock shall prosper.

PERDITA. Sir, welcome!

[*To* POLIXENES *and* CAMILLO

It is my father's will I should take on me
The hostess-ship o' the day:—you're welcome, sirs!
Give me those flowers there, Dorcas.—Reverend sirs,
For you there's rosemary and rue; these keep
Seeming and savor all the winter long:
Grace and remembrance be unto you both,
And welcome to our shearing!

POLIXENES. Shepherdess,
(A fair one are you,) well you fit our ages
With flowers of winter.

PERDITA. Sir, the year growing ancient,
Not yet on summer's death, nor on the birth
Of trembling winter, the fairest flowers o' the season
Are our carnations, and streak'd gillyvors,
Which some call nature's bastards: of that kind
Our rustic garden's barren, and I care not
To get slips of them.

POLIXENES. Wherefore, gentle maiden,
Do you neglect them?

PERDITA. For I have heard it said
There is an art which, in their piedness, shares
With great creating nature.

POLIXENES. Say there be;
Yet nature is made better by no mean
But nature makes that mean: so over that art,
Which, you say, adds to nature, is an art
That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry
A gentler scion to the wildest stock,
And make conceive a bark of baser kind
By bud of nobler race. This is an art
Which does mend nature,—change it rather; but
The art itself is nature.

PERDITA. So it is.

POLIXENES. Then make your garden rich in gillyvors,
And do not call them bastards.

PERDITA. I'll not put
The dibble in earth to set one slip of them;
No more than, were I painted, I would wish
This youth should say 'twere well, and only therefore
Desire to breed by me.—Here's flowers for you;
Hot lavender, mints, savory, marjoram;
The marigold, that goes to bed wi' the sun

And with him rises, weeping: these are flowers
Of middle summer, and, I think, they are given
To men of middle age. You are very welcome.

CAMILLO. I should leave grazing, were I of your flock,
And only live by gazing.

PERDITA. Out, alas!
You'd be so lean, that blasts of January
Would blow you through and through. Now, my fairest friends
I would I had some flowers o' the spring, that might
Become your time of day; and your's, and your's,
That wear upon your virgin branches yet
Your maiden-heads growing: O Proserpina,
For the flowers now, that frighted, thou let'st fall
From Dis's waggon! daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty: violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength (a malady
Most incident to maids); bold oxlips, and
The crown-imperial; lilies of all kinds,
The fleur-de-lis being one! O, these I lack
To make you garlands of; and, my sweet friend,
To strow him o'er and o'er.

FLORIZEL. What, like a corse?

PERDITA. No, like a bank, for love to lie and play on,
Not like a corse: or if—not to be buried,
But quick, and in mine arms. Come, take your flowers;
Methinks, I play as I have seen them do
In Whitsun pastorals: sure this robe of mine
Does change my disposition.

FLORIZEL. What you do,
Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet,
I'd have you do it ever: when you sing,
I'd have you buy and sell so; so, give alms;
Pray, so: and for the ordering your affairs,
To sing them too. When you do dance, I wish you
A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that: move still, still so,
And own no other function. Each your doing,
So singular in each particular,
Crowns what you're doing in the present deeds,
That all your acts are queens.

PERDITA. O Doricles,
Your praises are too large: but that your youth

And the true blood, which peeps forth fairly through it,
Do plainly give you out an unstained shepherd;
With wisdom I might fear, my Doricles,
You woo'd me the false way.

FLORIZEL. I think you have
As little skill to fear, as I have purpose
To put you to 't. But come, our dance, I pray:
Your hand, my Perdita: so turtles pair,
That never mean to part.

PERDITA. I'll swear for 'em.

POLIXENES. This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever
Ran on the green-sward: nothing she does, or seems,
But smacks of something greater than herself,
Too noble for this place.

CAMILLO. He tells her something
That makes her blood look out: good sooth she is
The queen of curds and cream.

This delicious scene is interrupted by the father of the prince discovering himself to Florizel, and haughtily breaking off the intended match between his son and Perdita. When Polixenes goes out, Perdita says,

"Even here undone:
I was not much afraid; for once or twice
I was about to speak: and tell him plainly,
The self-same sun that shines upon his court,
Hides not his visage from our cottage, but
Looks on alike. Will't please you, sir, be gone?
[*To* FLORIZEL
I told you what would come of this. Beseech you,
Of your own state take care: this dream of mine,
Being now awake, I'll queen it no inch further,
But milk my ewes and weep."

As Perdita, the supposed shepherdess, turns out to be the daughter of Hermione, and a princess in disguise, both feelings of the pride of birth and the claims of nature are satisfied by the fortunate event of the story, and the fine romance of poetry is reconciled [illegible] court etiquette.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL is one of the most pleasing of our author's comedies. The interest is however more of a serious than of a comic nature. The character of Helen is one of great sweetness and delicacy. She is placed in circumstances of the most critical kind, and has to court her husband both as a virgin and a wife: yet the most scrupulous nicety of female modesty is not once violated. There is not one thought or action that ought to bring a blush into her cheeks, or that for a moment lessens her in our esteem. Perhaps the romantic attachment of a beautiful and virtuous girl to one placed above her hopes by the circumstances of birth and fortune, was never so exquisitely expressed as in the reflections which she utters when young Roussillon leaves his mother's house, under whose protection she has been brought up with him, to repair to the French king's court.

"HELENA. Oh, were that all—I think not on my father,
And these great tears grace his remembrance more
Than those I shed for him. What was he like?
I have forgot him. My imagination
Carries no favor in it, but my Bertram's.
I am undone, there is no living, none,
If Bertram be away. It were all one
That I should love a bright particular star,
And think to wed it; he is so above me:
In his bright radiance and collateral light
Must I be comforted, not in his sphere.
Th' ambition in my love thus plagues itself;
The hind that would be mated by the lion,
Must die for love. 'Twas pretty, tho' a plague,

To see him every hour, to sit and draw
His arched brows, his hawking eye, his curls
In our heart's table: heart too capable
Of every line and trick of his sweet favor.
But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy
Must sanctify his relics."

The interest excited by this beautiful picture of a fond and innocent heart is kept up afterwards by her resolution to follow him to France, the success of her experiment in restoring the king's health, her demanding Bertram in marriage as a recompense, his leaving her in disdain, her interview with him afterwards disguised as Diana, a young lady whom he importunes with his secret addresses, and their final reconciliation when the consequences of her stratagem and the proofs of her love are fully made known. The persevering gratitude of the French king to his benefactress, who cures him of a languishing distemper by a prescription hereditary in her family, the indulgent kindness of the Countess, whose pride of birth yields, almost without a struggle, to her affection for Helen, the honesty and uprightness of the good old lord Lafeu, make very interesting parts of the picture. The wilful stubbornness and youthful petulance of Bertram are also very admirably described. The comic part of the play turns on the foily, boasting, and cowardice of Parolles, a parasite and hanger-on of Bertram's, the detection of whose false pretensions to bravery and honor forms a very amusing episode. He is first found out by the old lord Lafeu, who says, "The soul of this man is in his clothes;" and we are given afterwards that his heart is as false, though, and that they are false and hollow. The adventure of "the recovering of the drum" has become proverbial as a satire on rash enterprises and disastrous undertakings which the person never means to perform: nor can anything be more severe than what one of the best critics remarks upon what Parolles says of himself, "How is it possible he should know what he is, and be that he is?" Yet Parolles himself gives the best solution of the difficulty afterwards when he is "unmasked," to escape with life and the loss of character; for, so that he can save his bacon, he is by no means squeamish about the loss of pretensions, to which he had no sense

enough to know he had no real claim, and which he had assumed only as a means to live.

> "PAROLLES. Yet I am thankful: if my heart were great,
> 'Twould burst at this. Captain I'll be no more
> But I will eat and drink, and sleep as soft
> As captain shall. Simply the thing I am
> Shall make me live: who knows himself a braggart
> Let him fear this; for it shall come to pass,
> That every braggart shall be found an ass.
> Rust sword, cool blushes, and Parolles live
> Safest in shame; being fool'd, by fool'ry thrive;
> There's place and means for every man alive
> I'll after them."

The story of ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL and of several others of Shakspeare's plays, is taken from Boccaccio. The poet has dramatised the original novel with great skill and comic spirit, and has preserved all the beauty of character and sentiment without *improving upon* it, which was impossible. There is indeed in Boccaccio's serious pieces a truth, a pathos, and an exquisite refinement of sentiment, which is hardly to be met with in any prose writer whatever. Justice has not been done him by the world. He has in general passed for a mere narrator of lascivious tales or idle jests. This character probably originated in his obnoxious attacks on the monks, and has been kept up by the grossness of mankind, who revenged their own want of refinement on Boccaccio, and only saw in his writings what suited the coarseness of their own tastes. But the truth is, that he has carried sentiment of every kind to its very highest purity and perfection. By sentiment we would here understand the habitual workings of some one powerful feeling, where the heart reposes almost entirely upon itself, without the violent excitement of opposing duties or untoward circumstances. In this way, nothing ever came up to the story of Frederigo Alberigi and his Falcon. The perseverance in attachment, the spirit of gallantry and generosity displayed in it, has no parallel in the history of heroical sacrifices. The feeling is so unconscious too, and involuntary, is brought out in such small, unlooked-for, and unostentatious circumstances, as to show it to have been woven

into the very nature and soul of the author. The story of Isabella is scarcely less fine, and is more affecting in the circumstances and in the catastrophe. Dryden has done justice to the impassioned eloquence of the Tancred and Sigismunda; but has not given an adequate idea of the wild preternatural interest of the story of Honoria. Cimon and Iphigenia is by no means one of the best, notwithstanding the popularity of the subject. The proof of unaltered affection given in the story of Jeronymo, and the simple touches of nature and picturesque beauty in the story of the two lovers, who were poisoned by tasting of a leaf in the garden at Florence, are perfect master-pieces. The epithet of Divine was well bestowed on this great painter of the human heart. The invention implied in his different tales is immense: but we are not to infer that it is all his own. He probably availed himself of all the common traditions which were floating about in his time, and which he was the first to appropriate. Homer appears the most original of all authors—probably for no other reason than that we can trace the plagiarism no farther. Boccaccio has furnished subjects to numberless writers since his time, both dramatic and narrative. The story of Griselda is borrowed from his Decameron by Chaucer; as is the Knight's Tale (Palamon and Arcite) from his poem of the Theseid.

LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST.

If we were to part with any of the author's comedies, it should be this. Yet we should be loth to part with Don Adriano de Armado, that mighty potentate of nonsense, or his page, that handful of wit; with Nathaniel the curate, or Holofernes the school-master, and their dispute after dinner on "the golden cadences of poesy;" with Costard the clown, or Dull the constable. Biron is too accomplished a character to be lost to the world, and yet he could not appear without his fellow courtiers and the king: and if we were to leave out the ladies, the gentlemen would have no mistresses. So that we believe we may let the whole play stand as it is, and we shall hardly venture to "set a mark of reprobation on it." Still we have some objections to the style, which we think savors more of the pedantic spirit of Shakspeare's time than of his own genius; more of controversial divinity, and the logic of Peter Lombard, than of the inspiration of the Muse. It transports us quite as much to the manners of the court, and the quirks of courts of law, as to the scenes of nature or the fairy-land of his own imagination. Shakspeare has set himself to imitate the tone of polite conversation then prevailing among the fair, the witty, and the learned, and he has imitated it but too faithfully. It is as if the hand of Titian had been employed to give grace to the curls of a full-bottomed periwig, or Raphael had attempted to give expression to the tapestry figures in the House of Lords. Shakspeare has put an excellent description of this fashionable jargon into the mouth of the critical Holofernes, "as too picked, too spruce, too affected, too odd, as it were, too peregrinate, as I may call it;" and nothing can be more marked than the difference when he

breaks loose from the trammels he had imposed on himself, "as light as bird from brake," and speaks in his own person. We think, for instance, that in the following soliloquy the poet has fairly got the start of Queen Elizabeth and her maids of honor :—

> "Biron. O! and I forsooth in love,
> I that have been love's whip;
> A very beadle to an amorous sigh:
> A critic; nay, a night-watch constable,
> A domineering pedant o'er the boy,
> Than whom no mortal more magnificent.
> This whimpled, whining, purblind, wayward boy,
> This signior Junio, giant dwarf, Dan Cupid,
> Regent of love-rhimes, lord of folded arms,
> The anointed sovereign of sighs and groans:
> Liege of all loiterers and malecontents,
> Dread prince of plackets, king of codpieces,
> Sole imperator, and great general
> Of trotting parators (O my little heart!)
> And I to be a corporal of his field,
> And wear his colors like a tumbler's hoop.
> What? I love! I sue! I seek a wife!
> A woman, that is like a German clock,
> Still a repairing; ever out of frame;
> And never going aright, being a watch,
> And being watch'd that it may still go right!
> Nay, to be perjur'd, which is worst of all:
> And among three to love the worst of all,
> A whitely wanton with a velvet brow,
> With two pitch balls stuck in her face for eyes;
> Ay, and by heaven, one that will do the deed,
> Though Argus were her eunuch and her guard;
> And I to sigh for her! to watch for her!
> To pray for her! Go to; it is a plague
> That Cupid will impose for my neglect
> Of his almighty, dreadful little might.
> Well, I will love, write, sigh, pray, sue, and groan:
> Some men must love my lady, and some Joan."

The character of Biron drawn by Rosaline and that which Biron gives of Boyet are equally happy. The observations on the use and abuse of study, and on the power of beauty to quicken the understanding as well as the senses, are excellent. The scene which has the greatest dramatic effect is that in which

Biron, the king, Longaville, and Dumain, successively detect each other and are detected in their breach of their vow and in their profession of attachment to their several mistresses, in which they suppose themselves to be overheard by no one. The reconciliation between these lovers and their sweethearts is also very good, and the penance which Rosaline imposes on Biron, before he can expect to gain her consent to marry him, full of propriety and beauty.

> "Rosaline. Oft have I heard of you, my lord Biron,
> Before I saw you: and the world's large tongue
> Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks;
> Full of comparisons, and wounding flouts;
> Which you on all estates will execute,
> That lie within the mercy of your wit.
> To weed this wormwood from your faithful brain;
> And therewithal to win me, if you please
> (Without the which I am not to be won),
> You shall this twelvemonth term from day to day
> Visit the speechless sick, and still converse
> With groaning wretches; and your task shall be,
> With all the fierce endeavor of your wit,
> T' enforce the pained impotent to smile," &c.

The famous cuckoo-song closes the play: but we shall add no more criticisms: "the words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo."

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

This admirable comedy used to be frequently acted till of late years. Mr. Garrick's Benedick was one of his most celebrated characters: and Mrs. Jordan, we have understood, played Beatrice very delightfully. The serious part is still the most prominent here, as in other instances that we have noticed. Hero is the principal figure in the piece, and leaves an indelible impression on the mind by her beauty, her tenderness, and the hard trial of her love. The passage in which Claudio first makes a confession of his affection towards her, conveys as pleasing an image of the entrance of love into a youthful bosom as can well be imagined.

> "Oh, my lord,
> When you went onward with this noble action,
> I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
> That liked, but had a rougher task in hand
> Than to drive liking to the name of love:
> But now I am return'd, and that war-thoughts
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> Sweet, I did think to that I would woo thee."

In the scene at the altar, when Claudio, urged on by the villain Don John, brings the charge of inconstancy against her, and as it were divorces her in the very marriage ceremony, her appeal to her own conscience, and to her uncle, are made with the most affecting simplicity.

> "O God defend me, how [illegible]
> I never [illegible]

But, as a brother to his sister, show'd
Bashful sincerity, and comely love.
HERO. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you
CLAUDIO. Out on thy seeming, I will write against it:
You seem to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown:
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus, or those pamper'd animals
That rage in savage sensuality.
HERO. Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wide.
LEONATO. Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?
JOHN. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.
BENEDICK. This looks not like a nuptial.
HERO. True! O God!"

The justification of Hero in the end, and her restoration to the confidence and arms of her lover, is brought about by one of those temporary consignments to the grave of which Shakspeare seems to have been fond. He has perhaps explained the theory of this predilection in the following lines:—

"FRIAR. She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
Shall be lamented, pity'd, and excus'd,
Of every hearer: for it so falls out,
That what we have we prize not to the worth,
While we enjoy it; but being lack'd and lost,
Why then we rack the value; then we find
The virtue, that possession would not show us
Whilst it was ours.—So will it fare with Claudio:
When he shall hear she dy'd upon his words,
The idea of her love shall sweetly creep
Into his study of imagination;
And every lovely organ of her life
Shall come apparel'd in more precious habit,
More moving, delicate, and full of life,
Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
Than when she liv'd indeed."

The principal comic characters in MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, Benedick and Beatrice, are both essences in their kind. His character as a woman-hater is admirably supported, and his conversion to matrimony is no less happily effected by the pretended story of Beatrice's love for him. It is hard to say which

of the two scenes is the best, that of the trick which is thus practised on Benedick, or that in which Beatrice is prevailed on to take pity on him by overhearing her cousin and her maid declare (which they do on purpose) that he is dying of love for her. There is something delightfully picturesque in the manner in which Beatrice is described as coming to hear the plot which is contrived against herself—

> "For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
> Close by the ground, to hear our conference."

In consequence of what she hears (not a word of which is true) she exclaims, when these good-natured informants are gone,

> "What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?
> Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?
> Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride adieu!
> No glory lives behind the back of such.
> And, Benedick, love on, I will requite thee;
> Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand;
> If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
> To bind our loves up in an holy band:
> For others say thou dost deserve; and I
> Believe it better than reportingly."

And Benedick, on his part, is equally sincere in his repentance, with equal reason, after he has heard the grey-beard, Leonato, and his friend, "Monsieur Love," discourse of the desperate state of his supposed inamorata.

"This can be no trick; the conference was sadly borne.—They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady: it seems her affections have the full bent. Love me? why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured, they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her; they say too, that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry: I must not seem proud: happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending. They say, the lady is fair; 'tis a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous; 'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me; by my troth it is no addition to her wit; nor no glory to her that she loves me. Which may be hers, for I will be horribly in love with her. [illegible] I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage

but doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age.—Shall quips, and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain, awe a man from the career of his humor? No: the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.—Here comes Beatrice: by this day, she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her."

The beauty of all this arises from the characters of the persons so entrapped. Benedick is a professed and staunch enemy to marriage, and gives very plausible reasons for the faith that is in him. And as to Beatrice, she persecutes him all day with her jests (so that he could hardly think of being troubled with them at night), she turns him and all other things into ridicule, and is proof against everything serious:—

"HERO. Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes
Misprising what they look on; and her wit
Values itself so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak: she cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endeared.
URSULA. Sure, I think so;
And therefore, certainly, it were not good
She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.
HERO. Why, you speak truth: I never yet saw man,
How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featur'd,
But she would spell him backward: if fair-fac'd,
She'd swear the gentleman should be her sister;
If black, why, nature, drawing of an antick,
Made a foul blot: if tall, a lance ill-headed;
If low, an agate very vilely cut:
If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds;
If silent, why, a block moved with none.
So turns she every man the wrong side out;
And never gives to truth and virtue that
Which simpleness and merit purchaseth."

These were happy materials for Shakspeare to work on, and he has made a happy use of them. Perhaps that middle point of comedy was never more nicely hit in which the ludicrous blends with the tender, and our follies, turning round against themselves in support of our affections, retain nothing but their humanity.

Dogberry and Verges in this play are inimitable specimens of quaint blundering and misprisions of meaning; and are a standing record of that formal gravity of pretension and total want of common understanding, which Shakspeare no doubt copied from real life, and which in the course of two hundred years appear to have ascended from the lowest to the highest offices in the state.

AS YOU LIKE IT

SHAKSPEARE has here converted the forest of Arden into another Arcadia, where they "fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world." It is the most ideal of any of this author's plays. It is a pastoral drama, in which the interest arises more out of the sentiments and characters than out of the actions or situations. It is not what is done, but what is said, that claims our attention. Nursed in solitude, "under the shade of melancholy boughs," the imagination grows soft and delicate, and the wit runs riot in idleness, like a spoiled child, that is never sent to school. Caprice and fancy reign and revel here, and stern necessity is banished to the court. The mild sentiments of humanity are strengthened with thought and leisure; the echo of the cares and noise of the world strikes upon the ear of those "who have felt them knowingly," softened by time and distance. "They hear the tumult, and are still." The very air of the place seems to breathe a spirit of philosophical poetry; to stir the thoughts, to touch the heart with pity, as the drowsy forest rustles to the sighing gale. Never was there such beautiful moralising, equally free from pedantry or petulance.

> "And this their life, exempt from public haunts,
> Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

Jaques is the only purely contemplative character in Shakspeare. He thinks and does, nothing. His whole occupation is to amuse his mind, and he is totally regardless of his body and his fortunes. He is the prince of philosophical idlers; his

only passion is thought; he sets no value upon anything, but as it serves as food for reflection. He can "suck melancholy out of a song, as a weasel sucks eggs;" the motley fool, "who morals on the time," is the greatest prize he meets with in the forest. He resents Orlando's passion for Rosalind as some disparagement of his own passion for abstract truth; and leaves the Duke as soon as he is restored to his sovereignty, to seek his brother out who has quitted it, and turned hermit.

> —"Out of these convertites
> There is much matter to be heard and learnt."

Within the sequestered and romantic glades of the forest of Arden, they find leisure to be good and wise, or to play the fool and fall in love. Rosalind's character is made up of sportive gaiety and natural tenderness: her tongue runs the faster to conceal the pressure at her heart. She talks herself out of breath, only to get deeper in love. The coquetry with which she plays with her lover in the double character which she has to support is managed with the nicest address. How full of voluble, laughing grace is all her conversation with Orlando —

> —"In boodless mazes running
> With wanton haste and giddy cunning."

How full of real fondness and pretended cruelty is her answer to him when he promises to love her "For ever and day!"

"Say a day without the ever: no, no, Orlando, men are April when they woo, December when they wed: maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives: I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen; more clamorous than a parrot against rain, more new-fangled than an ape, more giddy in my desires than a monkey: I will weep for nothing, like Diana in the fountain, and I will do that when you are disposed to be merry; I will laugh like a hyen, and that when you are inclined to sleep.

> Orlando. But will my Rosalind do so?
> Rosalind. By my life, she will do as I do."

The silent and retired character of Celia is a necessary relief to the provoking loquacity of Rosalind, nor can anything be better conceived or more beautifully described than the mutual affection between the two cousins.

> — "We still have slept together,
> Rose at an instant, learn'd, play'd, eat together,
> And wheresoe'er we went, like Juno's swans,
> Still we went coupled and inseparable."

The unrequited love of Silvius for Phebe shows the perversity of this passion in the commonest scenes of life, and the rubs and stops which nature throws in its way, where fortune has placed none. Touchstone is not in love, but he will have a mistress as a subject for the exercise of his grotesque humor, and to show his contempt for the passion, by his indifference about the person. He is a rare fellow. He is a mixture of the ancient cynic philosopher with the modern buffoon, and turns folly into wit, and wit into folly, just as the fit takes him. His courtship of Aubrey not only throws a degree of ridicule on the state of wedlock itself, but he is equally an enemy to the prejudices of opinion in other respects. The lofty tone of enthusiasm which the Duke and his companion in exile spread over the stillness and solitude of a country life, receives a pleasant shock from Touchstone's skeptical determination of the question.

> "Corin. And how like you this shepherd's life, Mr. Touchstone?
> Clown. Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life; but in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is naught. In respect that it is solitary, I like it very well; but in respect that it is private, it is a very vile life. In respect it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well; but in respect it is not in the court, it is tedious. As it is a spare life, look you, it fits my humor; but as there is no more plenty in it, it goes much against my stomach."

Zimmerman's celebrated work on Solitude discovers only one *half* the sense of this passage.

There is hardly any of Shakspeare's plays that contains a greater number of passages that have been quoted in books of extracts, or a greater number of phrases that have become in a manner proverbial. If we were to give all the striking

passages, we should give half the play. We will only recall a few of the most delightful to the reader's recollection. Such are the meeting between Orlando and Adam, the exquisite appeal of Orlando to the humanity of the Duke and his company to supply him with food for the old man, and their answer, the Duke's description of a country life, and the account of Jaques moralising on the wounded deer, his meeting with Touchstone in the forest, his apology for his own melancholy and his satirical vein, and the well-known speech on the stages of human life, the old song of "Blow, blow, thou winter's wind," Rosalind's description of the marks of a lover and of the progress of them with different persons, the picture of the snake wreathed round Oliver's neck while the lioness watches her sleeping prey, and Touchstone's lecture to the shepherd, his defence of cuckolds, and panegyric on the virtues of "an If."—All of these are familiar to the reader: there is one passage of equal delicacy and beauty which may have escaped him, and with it we shall close our account of As you like it. It is Phebe's description of Ganimed, at the end of the third act.

"Think not I love him, though I ask for him:
'Tis but a peevish boy; yet he talks well—
But what care I for words? yet words do well,
When he that speaks them pleases those that hear.
It is a pretty youth—not very pretty:
But sure he's proud, and yet his pride becomes him:
He'll make a proper man: the best thing in him
Is his complexion; and faster than his tongue
Did make offence, his eye did heal it up.
He is not very tall; yet for his years he's tall:
His leg is but so so; and yet 'tis well:
There was a pretty redness in his lip,
A little riper, and more lusty red
Than that mingled in his cheek: 'twas just the difference
Betwixt the constant red and mingled damask.
There be some women, Silvius, had they marked him
In parcels as I did, would have gone near
To fall in love with him: but for my part
I love him not, nor hate him not; and yet
I have more cause to hate him than to love him:
For what had he to do to chide at me?
He said mine eyes were black and my hair black,
And now I am remembered, scorned at me:
I marvel why I answered not again:
But that's all one: omittance is no quittance.
I'll write to him a very taunting letter,
And thou shalt bear it: wilt thou, Silvius?
Phebe, with all my heart.
I'll write it straight;
The matter's in my head and in my heart:
I will be bitter with him and passing short.
Go with me, Silvius.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW is almost the only one of Shakspeare's comedies that has a regular plot, and downright moral. It is full of bustle, animation, and rapidity of action. It shows admirably how self-will is only to be got the better of by stronger will, and how one degree of ridiculous perversity is only to be driven out by another still greater. Petruchio is a madman in his senses; a very honest fellow, who hardly speaks a word of truth, and succeeds in all his tricks and impostures. He acts his assumed character to the life, with the most fantastical extravagance, with complete presence of mind, with untired animal spirits, and without a particle of ill-humor from beginning to end. The situation of poor Katherine, worn out by his incessant persecutions, becomes at last almost as pitiable as it is ludicrous, and it is difficult to say which to admire most, the unaccountableness of his actions, or the unalterableness of his resolutions. It is a character which most husbands ought to study, unless perhaps the very audacity of Petruchio's attempt might alarm them more than his success would encourage them. What a sound must the following speech carry to some married ears

> "Think you a little din can daunt my ears?
> Have I not in my time heard lions roar?
> Have I not heard the sea, puff'd up with winds,
> Rage like an angry boar, chafed with sweat?
> Have I not heard great ordnance in the field?
> And heav'n's artillery thunder in the skies?
> Have I not in a pitched battle heard
> Loud larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets clang?
> And do you tell me of a woman's tongue,

That gives not half so great a blow to hear.
As will a chestnut in a farmer's fire?"

Not all Petruchio's rhetoric would persuade more than "some dozen followers" to be of this heretical way of thinking. He unfolds his scheme for the *Taming of the Shrew*, on a principle of contradiction, thus:—

"I'll woo her with some spirit when she comes.
Say that she rail, why then I'll tell her plain
She sings as sweetly as a nightingale;
Say that she frown, I'll say she looks as clear
As morning roses newly wash'd with dew;
Say she be mute, and will not speak a word,
Then I'll commend her volubility,
And say she uttereth piercing eloquence:
If she do bid me pack, I'll give her thanks,
As tho' she bid me stay by her a week;
If she deny to wed, I'll crave the day,
When I shall ask the banns, and when be married?

He accordingly gains her consent to the match, by telling her father that he has got it; disappoints her by not returning at the time he has promised to wed her, and when he returns, creates no small consternation by the oddity of his dress and equipage. This however is nothing to the astonishment excited by his mad-brained behavior at the marriage. Here is the account of it by an eye-witness:—

"Gremio. Tut, she's a lamb, a dove, a fool to him:
I'll tell you, Sir Lucentio; when the priest
Should ask if Katherine should be his wife?
Ay, by gogs-wounds, quoth he; and swore so loud,
That, all amazed, the priest let fall the book:
And as he stoop'd again to take it up,
This mad-brain'd bridegroom took him such a cuff,
That down fell priest and book, and book and priest.
Now take them up, quoth he, if any list.
Tranio. What said the wench when he arose again?
Gremio. Trembled and shook; for why, he stamp'd and swore
As if the vicar meant to cozen him.
But after many ceremonies done,
He calls for wine: "A health," quoth he, as if
He had been aboard carousing to his mates

After a storm: quaft off the muscadel,
And threw the sops all in the sexton's face;
Having no other cause but that his beard
Grew thin and hungerly, and seem'd to ask
His sops as he was drinking. This done, he took
The bride about the neck, and kiss'd her lips
With such a clamorous smack, that at their parting
All the church echoed: and I seeing this,
Came thence for very shame; and after me,
I know, the rout is coming;
Such a mad marriage never was before!"

The most striking and at the same time laughable feature in the character of Petruchio throughout is the studied approximation to the intractable character of real madness, his apparent insensibility to all external considerations, and utter indifference to everything but the wild and extravagant freaks of his own self-will. There is no contending with a person on whom nothing makes an impression but his own purposes, and who is bent on his own whims just in proportion as they seem to want common sense. With him a thing's being plain and reasonable is a reason against it. The airs he gives himself are infinite, and his caprices as sudden as they are groundless. The whole of his treatment of his wife at home is in the same spirit of ironical attention and inverted gallantry. Everything flies before his will, like a conjuror's wand, and he only metamorphoses his wife's temper by metamorphosing her senses and all the objects she looks upon at a word's speaking. Such are his insisting that it is the moon, and not the sun, which they see, &c. This extravagance reaches its most pleasant and poetical height in the scene where, on their return to her father's, they meet old Vincentio, whom Petruchio immediately addresses as a young lady:

"Petruchio. Good morrow, gentle mistress, where away?
Tell me, sweet Kate, and tell me truly too,
Hast thou beheld a fresher gentlewoman?
Such war of white and red within her cheeks;
What stars do spangle heaven with such beauty,
As those two eyes become that heavenly face?
Fair lovely maid, once more good day to thee:
Sweet Kate, embrace her for her beauty's sake.
Hortensio. He'll make the man mad to make a woman of him.

KATHERINE. Young budding virgin, fair and fresh and sweet,
Whither away, or where is thy abode?
Happy the parents of so fair a child;
Happier the man whom favorable stars
Allot thee for his lovely bed-fellow.
PETRUCHIO. Why, how now, Kate, I hope thou art not mad:
This is a man, old, wrinkled, faded, wither'd,
And not a maiden, as thou say'st he is.
KATHERINE. Pardon, old father, my mistaken eyes,
That have been so bedazzled with the sun
That everything I look on seemeth green.
Now I perceive thou art a reverend father."

The whole is carried off with equal spirit, as if the poet's comic Muse had wings of fire. It is strange how one man could be so many things; but so it is. The concluding scene, in which trial is made of the obedience of the new-married wives (so triumphantly for Petruchio), is a very happy one.—In some parts of this play there is a little too much about music-masters and masters of philosophy. They were things of greater rarity in those days than they are now. Nothing, however, can be better than the advice which Tranio gives his master for the prosecution of his studies:—

"The mathematics, and the metaphysics,
[illegible] as you find best stomach serves your
No profit grows, where is no pleasure ta'en:
[illegible] study what you most affect."

We have heard the *Honey Moon* called "an elegant Katherine and Petruchio." We suspect we do not understand this word "elegant" in the sense that many people do. But in our sense of the word, we should call Lucrece's description of his mistress elegant:—

"Her lips, her voice, her eyes, her hair, were mine,
And with her breath she did perfume the air:
Sad [illegible] with her [illegible]."

When Biron [illegible] the same Lucrece for this circumstance, "I know a woman that is like an affectation, as she went to the garden for parsley to stuff a rabbit, and so may you, sir;"—there

is nothing elegant in this, and yet we hardly know which of the two passages is the best.

The Taming of the Shrew is a play within a play. It is supposed to be a play acted for the benefit of Sly the tinker, who is made to believe himself a lord, when he wakes after a drunken brawl. The character of Sly, and the remarks with which he accompanies the play, are as good as the play itself. His answer, when he is asked how he likes it, "Indifferent well; 'tis a good piece of work, would 'twere done," is in good keeping, as if he were thinking of his Saturday night's job. Sly does not change his tastes with his new situation, but in the midst of splendor and luxury still calls out lustily and repeatedly "for a pot o' the smallest ale." He is very slow in giving up his personal identity in his sudden advancement—"I am Christophero Sly, call me not honor nor lordship. I ne'er drank sack in my life: and if you give me any conserves, give me conserves of beef: ne'er ask me what raiment I'll wear, for I have no more doublets than backs, no more stockings than legs, nor no more shoes than feet, nay, sometimes more feet than shoes, or such shoes as my toes look through the over-leather. What, would you make me mad? Am not I Christophero Sly, old Sly's son of Burton-heath, by birth a pedlar, by education a card-maker, by transmutation a bear-herd, and now by present profession a tinker? Ask Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of Wincot, if she know me not; if she say I am not fourteen-pence on the score for sheer ale, score me up for the lying'st knave in Christendom."

This is honest. "The Slies are no rogues," as he says of himself. We have a great predilection for this representative of the family; and what makes us like him the better is, that we take him to be of kin (not many degrees removed) to Sancho Panza.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

This is a play as full of genius as it is of wisdom. Yet there is an original sin in the nature of the subject, which prevents us from taking a cordial interest in it. "The height of moral argument" which the author has here maintained in the intervals of passion, or blended with the more powerful impulses of nature, is rarely surpassed in any of his plays. But there is in general a want of passion; the affections are at a stand; our sympathies are repulsed and defeated in all directions. The only passion which influences the story is that of Angelo; and yet he seems to have a much greater passion for hypocrisy than for his mistress. Neither are we greatly enamored of Isabella's rigid chastity, though she could not act otherwise than she did. We cannot feel the same confidence in the virtue that is "sublimely good" at another's expense, as if it had been put to some less disinterested trial. As to the Duke, who makes a very imposing [illegible] stage character, he is more absorbed in his own [illegible] than anxious for the welfare of the state; more [illegible] of his own character than attentive to the feelings and [illegible] of others. Claudio is the only person who feels naturally; and yet he is placed in circumstances of distress which [illegible] the wish for his deliverance. Mariana [illegible] love with Angelo, whom we hate. In this respect, there may be said to be a general system of cross purposes between the feelings of the different characters and the sympathy of the reader or spectator. This principle of repugnance seems to have resulted as he began with the character of Master Barnardine, who "utterly sets at defiance the prayers of others, has even thrown off all self-regard [illegible] that apprehends

death no more dreadfully but as a drunken sleep; careless, reckless, and fearless of what's past, present, and to come." He is a fine antithesis to the morality and hypocrisy of the other characters of the play. Barnardine is Caliban transported from Prospero's wizard island to the forests of Bohemia or the prisons of Vienna. He is a creature of bad habits, as Caliban is of gross instincts. He has, however, a strong notion of the natural fitness of things, according to his own sensations—"He has been drinking hard all night, and he will not be hanged that day"—and Shakspeare has let him off at last. We do not understand why the philosophical German critic, Schlegel, should be so severe on those pleasant persons, Lucio, Pompey, and Master Froth, as to call them "wretches." They appear all mighty comfortable in their occupations, and determined to pursue them, "as the flesh and fortune shall serve." A very good exposure of the want of self-knowledge and contempt for others, which is so common in this world, is put into the mouth of Abhorson, the jailor, when the Provost proposes to associate Pompey with him in his office—"A bawd, sir? Fie upon him, he will discredit our mystery." And the same answer would serve, in nine instances out of ten, to the same kind of remark, "Go to, sir, you weigh equally; a feather will turn the scale." Shakspeare was in one sense the least moral of all writers; for morality (commonly so called) is made up of antipathies; and his talent consisted in sympathy with human nature, in all its shapes, degrees, depressions, and elevations. The object of the pedantic moralist is to find out the bad in everything: his was to show that "there is some soul of goodness in things evil." Even Master Barnardine is not left to the mercy of what others think of him; but, when he comes in, speaks for himself, and pleads his own cause, as well as if counsel had been assigned him. In one sense, Shakspeare was no moralist at all: in another, he was the greatest of all moralists. He was a moralist in the same sense in which nature is one. He taught what he had learnt from her. He showed the greatest knowledge of humanity, with the greatest fellow-feeling for it.

One of the most dramatic passages in the present play is the interview between Claudio and his sister, when she comes to

inform him of the conditions on which Angelo will spare his life.

"CLAUDIO. Let me know the point.
ISABELLA. O, I do fear thee, Claudio: and I quake,
Lest thou a feverous life should'st entertain,
And six or seven winters more respect
Than a perpetual honour. Dar'st thou die?
The sense of death is most in apprehension;
And the poor beetle, that we tread upon,
In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great
As when a giant dies.
CLAUDIO. Why give you me this shame?
Think you I can a resolution fetch
From flowery tenderness? if I must die,
I will encounter darkness as a bride,
And hug it in mine arms.
ISABELLA. There spake my brother! there my father's grave
Did utter forth a voice! Yes, thou must die:
Thou art too noble to conserve a life
In base appliances. This outward-sainted deputy—
Whose settled visage and deliberate word
Nips youth i' the head, and follies doth enmew,
As falcon doth the fowl—is yet a devil.
CLAUDIO. The prenzie Angelo?
ISABELLA. Oh, 'tis the cunning livery of hell,
The damned'st body to invest and cover
In prenzie guards! Dost thou think, Claudio,
If I would yield him my virginity,
Thou might'st be freed?
CLAUDIO. Oh, heavens! it cannot be.
ISABELLA. Yes, he would give't thee, for this rank offence
So to offend him still: this night's the time
That I should do what I abhor to name,
Or else thou dy'st to-morrow.
CLAUDIO. Thou shalt not do't.
ISABELLA. Oh, were it but my life,
I'd throw it down for your deliverance
As frankly as a pin.
CLAUDIO. Thanks, dear Isabel.
ISABELLA. Be ready, Claudio, for your death to-morrow.
CLAUDIO. Yes. Has he affections in him,
That thus can make him bite the law by the nose?
When he would force it, sure it is not so,
Or [illegible]
ISABELLA. [illegible]

CLAUDIO. If it were damnable, he, being so wise,
Why would he for the momentary trick
Be perdurably fin'd? Oh, Isabel!
ISABELLA. What says my brother?
CLAUDIO. Death is a fearful thing.
ISABELLA. And shamed life a hateful.
CLAUDIO. Ay, but to die, and go we know not where,
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendant world; or to be worse than worst
Of those, that lawless and incertain thoughts
Imagine howling!—'tis too horrible!
The weariest and most loathed worldly life,
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death.
ISABELLA. Alas! alas!
CLAUDIO. Sweet sister, let me live.
What sin you do to save a brother's life,
Nature dispenses with the deed so far,
That it becomes a virtue."

What adds to the dramatic beauty of this scene and the effect of Claudio's passionate attachment to life is, that it immediately follows the Duke's lecture to him, in the character of the Friar, recommending an absolute indifference to it.

— "Reason thus with life,—
If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing
That none but fools would keep: a breath thou art,
Servile to all the skyey influences
That do this habitation, where thou keep'st,
Hourly afflict: merely, thou art death's fool;
For him thou labor'st by thy flight to shun,
And yet run'st toward him still; thou art not noble,
For all the accommodations, that thou bear'st,
Are nurs'd by baseness: thou art by no means valiant;
For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork
Of a poor worm: thy best of rest is sleep,
And that thou oft provok'st; yet grossly fear'st

Thy death, which is no more. Thou art not thyself·
For thou exist'st on many a thousand grains
That issue out of dust: happy thou art not;
For what thou hast not, still thou striv'st to get;
And what thou hast, forget'st; thou art not certain.
For thy complexion shifts to strange effects,
After the moon: if thou art rich, thou art poor;
For, like an ass, whose back with ingots bows,
Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,
And death unloads thee: friend thou hast none;
For thy own bowels which do call thee sire,
The mere effusion of thy proper loins,
Do curse the gout, serpigo, and the rheum,
For ending thee no sooner: thou hast nor youth, nor age,
But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep,
Dreaming on both: for all thy blessed youth,
Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms
Of palsied eld; and when thou art old and rich,
Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty,
To make thy riches pleasant. What's yet in this,
That bears the name of life? Yet in this life
Lie hid more thousand deaths: yet death we fear,
That makes these odds all even."

THE

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR is no doubt a very amusing play, with a great deal of humor, character, and nature in it; but we should have liked it much better, if any one else had been the hero of it, instead of Falstaff. We could have been contented if Shakspeare had not been "commanded to show the knight in love." Wits and philosophers, for the most part, do not shine in that character; and Sir John himself, by no means, comes off with flying colors. Many people complain of the degradation and insults to which Don Quixote is so frequently exposed in his various adventures. But what are the unconscious indignities which he suffers, compared with the sensible mortifications which Falstaff is made to bring upon himself? What are the blows and buffetings which the Don receives from the staves of Yanguesian carriers, or from Sancho Panza's more hard-hearted hands, compared with the contamination of the buck-basket, the disguise of the fat woman of Brentford, and the horns of Herne the hunter, which are discovered on Sir John's head? In reading the play, we indeed wish him well through all these discomfitures, but it would have been as well if he had not got into them. Falstaff, in THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR, is not the man he was in the two parts of *Henry IV.* His wit and eloquence have left him. Instead of making a butt of others, he is made a butt of by them. Neither is there a single particle of love in him to excuse his follies; he is merely a designing, bare-faced knave, and an unsuccessful one. The scene with Ford as Master Brook, and that with Simple, Slender's man,

who comes to ask after the Wise Woman, are almost the only ones in which his old intellectual ascendency appears. He is like a person recalled to the stage to perform an unaccustomed and ungracious part; and in which we perceive only "some faint sparks of those flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the hearers in a roar." But the single scene with Doll Tear-sheet, or Mrs. Quickly's account of his desiring "to eat some of housewife Keach's prawns," and telling her "to be no more so familiar with such people," is worth the whole of THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR put together. Ford's jealousy, which is the mainspring of the comic incidents, is certainly very well managed. Page, on the contrary, appears to be somewhat uxorious in his disposition; and we have pretty plain indication of the effect of the characters of the husbands on the different degrees of fidelity in their wives. Mrs. Quickly makes a very lively go-between, both between Falstaff and his Dulcineas, and Anne Page and her lovers, and seems in the latter case so intent on her own interest as totally to overlook the intentions of her employers. Her master, Doctor Caius, the Frenchman, and her fellow-servant, Jack Rugby, are very completely described. This last mentioned person is rather quaintly commended by Mrs. Quickly, as "an honest, willing, kind fellow, as ever servant shall come in house withal, and I warrant you, no tell-tale, nor no breed-bate; his worst fault is that he is given to prayer; he is something peevish that way; but nobody but has his fault." The Welsh Parson, Sir Hugh Evans (a title which in those days was given to the clergy), is an excellent character in all respects. He is as respectable as he is laughable. He has "very good discretions and very odd humors." The duel-scene with Caius gives him an opportunity to show his "choler and his tremblings of mind," his valor and his melancholy, in an irresistible manner. In the dialogue, which at his mother's request he holds with his pupil, William Page, to show his progress in learning, it is hard to say whether the simplicity of the master or the scholar is the greatest. Nym, Bardolph, and Pistol are but the shadows of what they were; and Justice Shallow himself has little of his consequence left. But his cousin, Slender, makes up for the deficiency. He is a very potent piece

of imbecility. In him the pretensions of the worthy Gloucestershire family are well kept up, and immortalised. He and his friend Sackerson, and his book of songs, and his love of Anne Page, and his having nothing to say to her, can never be forgotten. It is the only first-rate character in the play. Shakspeare is the only writer who was as great in describing weakness as strength.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS.

This comedy is taken very much from the Menæchmi of Plautus, and is not an improvement on it. Shakspeare appears to have bestowed no great pains on it, and there are but a few passages which bear the decided stamp of his genius. He seems to have relied on his author, and on the interest arising out of the intricacy of the plot. The curiosity excited is certainly very considerable, though not of the most pleasing kind. We are teazed as with a riddle, which notwithstanding we try to solve. In reading the play, from the sameness of the names of the two Antipholises and the two Dromios, as well from their being constantly taken for each other by those who see them, it is difficult, without a painful effort of attention, to keep the characters distinct in the mind. And again, on the stage, either the complete similarity of their persons and dress must produce the same perplexity whenever they first enter, or the identity of appearance which the story supposes will be destroyed. We still, however, having a clue to the difficulty, can tell which is which, merely from the practical contradictions which arise, as soon as the different parties begin to speak; and we are indemnified for the perplexity and blunders into which we are thrown by seeing others thrown into greater and almost inextricable ones. [illegible] Shakspeare was [illegible] what [illegible] W[illegible] ever that [illegible] [illegible] perfect [illegible] perhaps by the [illegible] excellen-ces. He [illegible] up, and

he soared longest and best on unborrowed plumes. The only passage of a very Shakspearian cast in this comedy is the one in which the Abbess, with admirable characteristic artifice, makes Adriana confess her own misconduct in driving her husband mad.

"ABBESS. How long hath this possession held the man?
ADRIANA. This week he hath been heavy, sour, sad,
And much, much different from the man he was;
But, till this afternoon, his passion
Ne'er brake into extremity of rage.
ABBESS. Hath he not lost much wealth by wreck at sea?
Bury'd some dear friend? Hath not else his eye
Stray'd his affection in unlawful love?
A sin prevailing much in youthful men,
Who give their eyes the liberty of gazing
Which of these sorrows is he subject to?
ADRIANA. To none of these, except it be the last:
Namely, some love, that drew him oft from home.
ABBESS. You should for that have reprehended him
ADRIANA. Why, so I did.
ABBESS. But not rough enough.
ADRIANA. As roughly as my modesty would let me.
ABBESS. Hapily, in private.
ADRIANA. And in assemblies too.
ABBESS. Ay, but not enough.
ADRIANA. It was the copy of our conference:
In bed, he slept not for my urging it;
At board, he fed not for my urging it;
Alone it was the subject of my theme;
In company, I often glanc'd at it;
Still did I tell him it was vile and bad.
ABBESS. And therefore came it that the man was mad.
The venomed clamors of a jealous woman
Poison more deadly than a mad dog's tooth.
It seems, his sleeps were hinder'd by thy railing:
And therefore comes it that his head is light.
Thou say'st his meat was sauc'd with thy upbraidings:
Unquiet meals make ill digestions,
Therefore the raging fire of fever bred:
And what's a fever but a fit of madness?
Thou say'st his sports were hinder'd by thy brawls:
Sweet recreation barr'd, what doth ensue,
But moody and dull melancholy,
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair;

> And, at her heels, a huge infectious troop
> Of pale distemperatures, and foes to life?
> In food, in sport, and life-preserving rest
> To be disturb'd, would mad or man or beast:
> The consequence is then, thy jealous fits
> Have scar'd thy husband from the use of wits.
>
> LUCIANA. She never reprehended him but mildly,
> When he demean'd himself rough, rude, and wildly. —
> Why bear you these rebukes and answer not?
> ADRIANA. She did it by the rule of my own report."

Pinch, the conjurer is also an excrescence not to be found in Plautus. He is indeed a very formidable anachronism.

> "Lay hands on this dark, lean-faced villain,
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> [illegible]
> And bring him hither."

This is exactly like some of the Puritanical portraits to be met with in Defoe.

DOUBTFUL PLAYS OF OF SHAKSPEARE.

We shall give for the satisfaction of the reader what the celebrated German critic, Schlegel, says on this subject, and then add a very few remarks of our own.

"All the editors, with the exception of Capell, are unanimous in rejecting *Titus Andronicus* as unworthy of Shakspeare, though they always allow it to be printed with the other pieces, as the scape-goat, as it were, of their abusive criticism. The correct method in such an investigation is first to examine into the external grounds, evidences, &c., and to weigh their worth; and then to adduce the internal reasons derived from the quality of the work. The critics of Shakspeare follow a course directly the reverse of this; they set out with a preconceived opinion against a piece, and seek, in justification of this opinion, to render the historical grounds suspicious, and to set them aside. *Titus Andronicus* is to be found in the first folio edition of Shakspeare's works, which it is known was conducted by Heminge and Condell, for many years his friends, and fellow-managers of the same theatre. Is it possible to persuade ourselves that they would not have known if a piece in their repertory did or did not actually belong to Shakspeare? And are we to lay to the charge of these honorable men a designed fraud in this single case, when we know that they did not show themselves so very desirous of scraping everything together which went by the

name of Shakspeare, but, as it appears, merely gave those plays of which they had manuscripts in hand? Yet the following circumstance is still stronger: George Meres, a contemporary and admirer of Shakspeare, mentions *Titus Andronicus* in an enumeration of his works, in the year 1598. Meres was personally acquainted with the poet, and so very intimately, that the latter read over to him his sonnets before they were printed. I cannot conceive that all the critical scepticism in the world would be sufficient to get over such a testimony.

"This tragedy, it is true, is framed according to a false idea of the tragic, which by an accumulation of cruelties and enormities degenerates into the horrible, and yet leaves no deep impression behind: the story of Tereus and Philomela is heightened and overcharged under other names, and mixed up with the escapes of Atreus and Thyestes, and many other incidents. In detail there is no want of beautiful lines, bold images, nay, even features which betray the peculiar conception of Shakspeare. Among these we may reckon the joy of the treacherous Moor at the blackness and ugliness of his child begot in adultery; and in the compassion of Titus Andronicus, grown childish through grief, for a fly which had been struck dead, and his rage afterwards when he imagines he discovers in it his blood-enemy, we recognize the future poet of *Lear*. Are the critics afraid that Shakspeare's fame would be injured, were it established that in his early youth he ushered into the world a rude and immature work? Was Rome less the conqueror of the world, because Romulus could leap over its first walls? Let any one place him in Shakspeare's situation at the commencement of his career. He found only a few indifferent models, and yet those not with the most favorable recommendations. Rude nations are ever difficult to please in the novelty of an art: their taste has become fastidious from choice and abundance. Must not this situation have had its influence on him? Must he not, under hundred different departments, have sought and by experiments of his own mind discovered *that* which best suits the genius of a dramatic poet? How even highly gifted natures must have groped about for several centuries before they could find their right path. Genius is in a certain sense infallible, and has a right to learn;

but art is to be learned, and must be acquired by practice and experience. In Shakspeare's acknowledged works we find hardly any traces of his apprenticeship, and yet an apprenticeship he certainly had. This every artist must have, and especially in a period where he has not before him the example of a school already formed. I consider it as extremely probable, that Shakspeare began to write for the theatre at a much earlier period than the one which is generally stated, namely, the year 1590. It appears that, as early as the year 1584, when only twenty years of age, he had left his paternal home and repaired to London. Can we imagine that such an active head would remain idle for six whole years without making any attempt to emerge by his talents from an uncongenial situation? That in the dedication of the poem of Venus and Adonis he calls it 'the first heir of his invention,' proves nothing against the supposition. It was the first which he printed; he might have composed it at an earlier period; perhaps, also, he did not include theatrical labors, as they then possessed but little literary dignity. The earlier Shakspeare began to compose for the theatre, the less are we enabled to consider the immaturity and imperfection of a work as a proof of its spuriousness, in opposition to historical evidence, if we only find in it prominent features of his mind. Several of the works rejected as spurious may still have been produced in the period betwixt *Titus Andronicus*, and the earliest of the acknowledged pieces.

"At last, Steevens published seven pieces ascribed to Shakspeare in two supplementary volumes. It is to be remarked, that they all appeared in print in Shakspeare's life-time, with his name prefixed at full length. They are the following:—

"1. *Locrine*. The proofs of the genuineness of this piece are not altogether unambiguous; the grounds for doubt, on the other hand, are entitled to attention. However, this question is immediately connected with that respecting *Titus Andronicus*, and must be at the same time resolved in the affirmative or negative.

"2. *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*. This piece was acknowledged by Dryden, but as a youthful work of Shakspeare. It is most undoubtedly his, and it has been admitted into several of the

late editions. The supposed imperfections originate in the circumstance, that Shakspeare here handled a clumsy and extravagant romance of the old poet Gower, and was unwilling to drag the stage out of its proper sphere. Hence he even introduces Gower himself, and makes him deliver a part entirely in his antiquated language and versification. This power of assimilating so foreign a manner is at least no proof of helplessness.

"3. *The London Prodigal.* If we are not mistaken, Lessing pronounced this piece to be Shakspeare's, and wished to bring it on the German stage.

"4. *The Puritan: or, the Widow of Watling Street.* One of our literary friends, intimately acquainted with Shakspeare, was inquisitive enough to count and have weighed a play for us, merely to see if Bandello, and that in this way we must account for the difference between the present piece and his other manner. To follow out this idea, however, would lead us into too critical investigation.

"5. *Thomas, Lord Cromwell.*

"6. *Sir John Oldcastle, First Part.*

"7. *A Yorkshire Tragedy.*

"The five last pieces are not by any means, and notably Shakspeare's, but for very opposite reasons deserve to be classed among his best and most characteristic. Steevens admits at last, more or less, that these are Shakspeare's, as well as the others, excepting *Locrine*, of which he says, of all the world would stake their reputation upon its genuineness, they would be sure to lose it. This condemnatory sentence is not, however, in the least convincing, but is at most supported by external reasons. I should have been glad to know what could have been natural suggestions to have excluded from Shakspeare's works such a powerful master-piece, and what he would have thought proper to put in its place, had the publication of it been left entirely to his discretion. *Thomas, Lord Cromwell*, and *Sir John Oldcastle* are, on the contrary, historical dramas, and must, on this account, be taken into consideration with *Henry the Eighth*, and *Henry the Fifth*. The [illegible] of *Old Castle* [illegible]; I know not whether any [illegible] has been [illegible] in England, or whether it is [illegible]. *The*

Yorkshire Tragedy is a tragedy in one act, a dramatised tale of murder: the tragical effect is overpowering, and it is extremely important to see how poetically Shakspeare could handle such a subject.

"There have been still farther ascribed to him:—1st. *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, a comedy in one act, printed in Dodsley's old plays. This has certainly some appearances in its favor. It contains a merry landlord, who bears a great similarity to the one in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. However, at all events, though an ingenious, it is but a hasty sketch. 2d. *The Accusation of Paris*. 3d. *The Birth of Merlin*. 4th. *Edward the Third*. 5th. *The Fair Emma*. 6th. *Mucedorus*. 7th. *Arden of Feversham*. I have never seen any of these, and cannot therefore say anything respecting them. From the passages cited, I am led to conjecture that the subject of *Mucedorus* is the popular story of Valentine and Orson; a beautiful subject, which Lope de Vega has also taken for a play. *Arden of Feversham* is said to be a tragedy on the story of a man, from whom the poet was descended by the mother's side. If the quality of the piece is not too directly at variance with this claim, the circumstance would afford an additional probability in its favor. For such motives were not foreign to Shakspeare: he treated Henry the Seventh, who bestowed lands on his forefathers for services performed by them, with a visible partiality.

"Whoever takes from Shakspeare a play early ascribed to him, and confessedly belonging to his time, is unquestionably bound to answer, with some degree of probability, this question: who did write it? Shakspeare's competitors in the dramatic walk are pretty well known, and if those of them who have even acquired a considerable name, a Lily, a Marlowe, a Heywood, are still so very far below him, we can hardly imagine that the author of a work, which rises so high beyond theirs, would have remained unknown."—*Lectures on Dramatic Literature*, vol. ii., p. 252.

We agree to the truth of this last observation, but not to the justice of its application to some of the plays here mentioned. It is true that Shakspeare's best works are very superior to those of Marlowe or Heywood, but it is not true that the best of the

doubtful plays above enumerated are superior or even equal to the best of theirs. *The Yorkshire Tragedy*, which Schlegel speaks of as an undoubted production of our author's, is much more in the manner of Heywood than of Shakspeare. The effect is indeed overpowering, but the mode of producing it is by no means poetical. The praise which Schlegel gives to *Thomas, Lord Cromwell*, and to *Sir John Oldcastle*, is altogether exaggerated. They are very indifferent compositions, which have not the slightest pretensions to rank with *Henry V.* or *Henry VIII.* We suspect that the German critic was not very well acquainted with the dramatic contemporaries of Shakspeare, or aware of their general merits; and that accordingly he mistakes a resemblance in style and manner for an equal degree of excellence. Shakspeare differed from the other writers of his age not in the mode of his subjects, but in the grace and power which he displayed in them. The reason assigned by a literary friend of Schlegel's for supposing *The Puritan; or, the Widow of Watling Street*, to be Shakspeare's, viz. that it is in the style of Ben Jonson, that is, in a style just the reverse of his own, is not very intelligible to a plain English understanding. *Locrine*, and *The London Prodigal*, if they were Shakspeare's at all, must have been the sins of his youth. *Arden of Feversham* contains several striking passages, but the passion which they express is rather that of a sanguine temperament than of a lofty imagination; and in this respect they approximate more nearly to the style of other writers of the time than to Shakspeare's. [illegible] certainly as unlike Shakspeare's usual style [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] decided

and overcharged. It is not like a first imperfect essay, but shows a confirmed habit, a systematic preference of violent effect to everything else. There are occasional detached images of great beauty and delicacy, but these were not beyond the powers of other writers then living. The circumstance which inclines us to reject the external evidence in favor of this play being Shakspeare's is, that the grammatical construction is constantly false and mixed up with vulgar abbreviations, a fault that never occurs in any of his genuine plays. A similar defect, and the halting measure of the verse, are the chief objections to *Pericles of Tyre*, if we except the far-fetched and complicated absurdity of the story. The movement of the thoughts and passions has something in it not unlike shakspeare, and several of the descriptions are either the original hints of passages which shakspeare has ingrafted on his other plays, or are imitations of them by some cotemporary poet. The most memorable idea in it is in Marina's speech, where she compares the world to a "lasting storm, hurrying her from her friends."

POEMS AND SONNETS

Our idolatry of Shakspeare (not to say our admiration) ceases with his plays. In his other productions, he was a mere author, though not a common author. It was only by representing others, that he became himself. He could go out of himself, and express the soul of Cleopatra; but in his own person, he appeared to be always waiting for the prompter's cue. In expressing the thoughts of others, he seemed inspired; in expressing his own, he was a mechanic. The licence of an assumed character was necessary to restore his genius to the privileges of nature, and to give him courage to break through the tyranny of fashion, the trammels of custom. In his plays, he was "as broad and casing as the general air:" in his poems, on the contrary, he appears to be "cooped, and cabined in" by all the technicalities of art, by all the petty intricacies of thought and language, which poetry had learned from the controversial jargon of the schools, where words had been made a substitute for things. There was, if we mistake not, something of modesty, and a painful sense of personal propriety at the bottom of this. Shakspeare's imagination, by identifying itself with the strongest characters in the most trying circumstances, grappled at once with nature, and trampled the littleness of art under his feet: the rapid changes of situation, the wide range of the universe, gave him life and spirit, and afforded him full scope for his genius; but returned into his closet again, and having assumed the badge of his profession, he could only labour in his vocation, and conform himself to existing models. The thoughts, the passions, the words which the poet's pen, "glancing from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven," lent to others, shook off the fetters

of pedantry and affectation; while his own thoughts and feelings, standing by themselves, were seized upon as lawful prey, and tortured to death according to the established rules and practice of the day. In a word, we do not like Shakspeare's poems, because we like his plays: the one, in all their excellences, are just the reverse of the other. It has been the fashion of late to cry up our author's poems as equal to his plays: this is the desperate cant of modern criticism. We would ask, was there the slightest comparison between Shakspeare, and either Chaucer or Spenser, as mere poets? Not any.—The two poems of Venus and Adonis and of Tarquin and Lucrece appear to us like a couple of ice-houses. They are about as hard, as glittering, and as cold. The author seems all the time to be thinking of his verses, and not of his subject,—not of what his characters would feel, but of what he shall say; and as it must happen in all such cases, he always puts into their mouths those things which they would be the last to think of, and which it shows the greatest ingenuity in him to find out. The whole is labored, up-hill work. The poet is perpetually singling out the difficulties of the art to make an exhibition of his strength and skill in wrestling with them. He is making perpetual trials of them, as if his mastery over them were doubted. The images, which are often striking, are generally applied to things which they are the least like: so that they do not blend with the poem, but seem stuck upon it, like splendid patch-work, or remain quite distinct from it, like detached substances, painted and varnished over. A beautiful thought is sure to be lost in an endless commentary upon it. The speakers are like persons who have both leisure and inclination to make riddles on their own situation, and to twist and turn every object or incident into acrostics and anagrams. Everything is spun out into allegory; and a digression is always preferred to the main story. Sentiment is built up upon plays of words; the hero or heroine feels, not from the impulse of passion, but from the force of dialectics. There is besides a strange attempt to substitute the language of painting for that of poetry, to make us *see* their feelings in the faces of the persons; and again, consistently with this, in the description of the picture in Tarquin and Lucrece, those circumstances are

chiefly insisted on, which it would be impossible to convey except by words. The invocation to Opportunity in the Tarquin and Lucrece is full of thoughts and images, but at the same time is overloaded by them. The concluding stanza expresses all our objections to this kind of poetry:—

> "O! idle words, servants to shallow fools,
> Unprofitable sounds, weak arbitrators!
> Busy yourselves in skill-contending schools;
> Debate where leisure serves with dull debaters;
> To trembling clients be their mediators:
> For me, I force not argument a straw,
> Since that my case is past all help of law."

The description of the horse in Venus and Adonis has been particularly admired, and not without reason:—

> "Round-hoof'd, short-jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
> Broad breast, full eye, small head, and nostril wide,
> High crest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong,
> Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide,
> Look what a horse should have he did not lack,
> Save a proud rider on so proud a back."

Now this inventory of perfections shows great knowledge of the horse; and is good matter-of-fact poetry. Let the reader but compare it with the speech in *The Midsummer Night's Dream* where Theseus describes his hounds—

> "My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
> So flew'd, so sanded, and their heads are hung
> With ears that sweep away the morning dew"—

and he will perceive at once what we mean by the difference between Shakspeare's own poetry, and that of his plays. We prefer the Passionate Pilgrim very much to the Lover's Complaint. It has been doubted whether the latter poem is Shakspeare's.

Of the Sonnets we do not well know what to say. The subject of each, in general, is the same with that of the Epistles; but many of them are highly poetical in the manner and interesting as they relate to the state of the poet and to the age of the author. The following are some of the most striking:—

CONSTANCY.

"Let those who are in favor with their stars,
Of public honor and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
Unlook'd for joy in that I honor most.
Great princes' favorites their fair leaves spread,
But as the marigold in the sun's eye;
And in themselves their pride lies buried,
For at a frown they in their glory die.
The painful warrior famoused for fight,
After a thousand victories once foil'd,
Is from the book of honor razed quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd:
Then happy I, that love and am belov'd,
Where I may not remove, nor be remov'd."

LOVE'S CONSOLATION.

"When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my out-cast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possess'd,
Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least:
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee,—and then my state
(Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven's gate:
For thy sweet love remember'd, such wealth brings,
That then I scorn to change my state with kings."

NOVELTY.

"My love is strengthen'd, though more weak in seeming
I love not less, though less the show appear:
That love is merchandis'd whose rich esteeming
The owner's tongue doth publish everywhere.
Our love was new, and then but in the spring,
When I was wont to greet it with my lays:
As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
And stops his pipe in growth of riper days:

Not that the summer is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
But that wild music burdens every bough,
And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
Therefore, like her, I sometimes hold my tongue,
Because I would not dull you with my song."

LIFE'S DECAY.

"That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight of such day,
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the deathbed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long."

In all these, as well as in many others, there is a mild tone of sentiment, deep, mellow, and sustained, very different from the crudeness of his earlier poems.

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